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# History of Mechanicsburg Indiana

BY EMILY WEEKS



Published under the auspices of  
**THE QUI VIVE CLUB**  
Mechanicsburg, Indiana



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Copyright, 1907, by Emily Weeks.



*To the memory of my sister,*  
*ELIZABETH WEEKS,*  
*whose life was spent among*  
*and for the people of*  
*Mechanicsburg.*



## *INTRODUCTION*

The following history was written for the Qui Vive Club, and read before that organization by the author. We found the paper of too great historical value to be lost and decided to preserve it in this form, hoping that others, as well as members of the Club, may enjoy it.

QUI VIVE CLUB.





# History of Mechanicsburg.

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ONLY a few generations ago, where our village now stands, the virgin forest covered the land and gave shelter to the deer, the fox, and to wild birds innumerable. The stillness of the night was often broken by the rushing feet and hideous cry of a pack of hungry wolves. Here the Hiawathas hunted, smoked, wooed and won their Minnehahas. Encroaching civilization forced the Indian westward and felled the forest. The wigwam gave way to the settler's cabin and little patches of maize were superseded by broad fields of grain.

Among the pioneers who bought of the government the land now comprising the village of Mechanicsburg and vicinity were the brothers Peter, George, John, Jacob and Daniel Keesling, who came from Ohio in 1828. Thomas Hasty entered his land June, 1831. John Bonham, of Tennessee, entered his land north of town November 9, 1831; and five days later, Archibald Dunbar entered a tract of land south of town. Mr. Dunbar in 1841 sold the east half to Samuel Alspaw. The west half he had sold in 1840 to Martin Shaffer and John Raper. Mr. Shaffer sold his interest to Mr. Raper, who, in 1842, sold to Nathan Murphy. In 1865 Mr. Murphy sold to Elihu Swain and N. R. Elliott, and the following year he moved to Ogden. Calvin F. Keesling bought Elihu Swain's interest in 1875 and lived here until 1880.

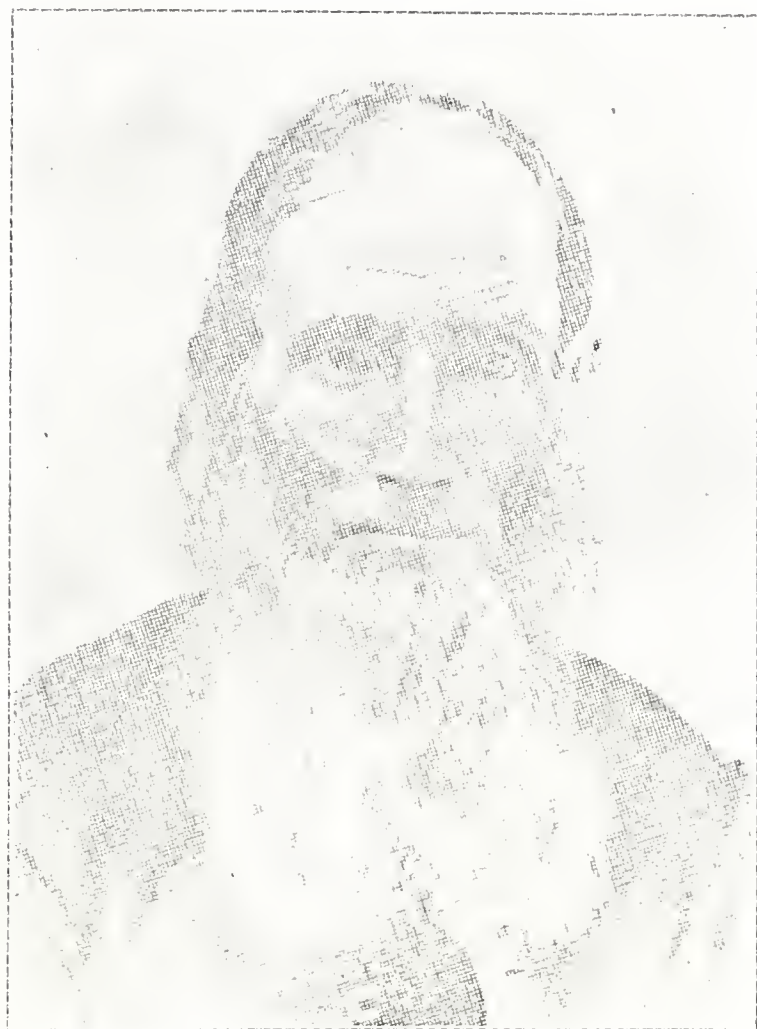


when he sold to N. R. Elliott and I. W. Cooper. Wm. Alexander came from Preble County, Ohio, in 1833, and entered land upon which the south half of Mechanicsburg was built. Moses Wilhoit came from Ohio in 1831. John Swain, Lewis Swain, and William Jones came from Tennessee in 1834. The land upon which John Swain settled had been entered November 5, 1829. Lewis Swain's land had been entered by his father, June 8, 1833. William Jones entered eighty acres, which he soon sold to John Keesling for \$195.00. William Keesling bought this of his father, and in 1854 built a home there which he occupied the remainder of his life. It is now owned by W. H. Cummins. The east eighty acres of the Wm. Keesling farm was entered by John Swain and is now owned by W. H. Keesling. Isaac Adamson came from Tennessee about 1830. Solomon Bills entered eighty acres of land but soon sold one-half to George Keesling, the other half to Lewis Swain.

The northern half of the village was built upon the south-east corner of George Keesling's land and the south-west corner of Peter Keesling's land, while the southern half was built upon the Alexander farm.

The first house built upon the land now included in the town was the log farm house in which Wm. Alexander lived. It stood a few rods south-west of Mrs. N. R. Elliott's present home. Later the main part of the building was moved to another lot by John Alspaw, and is at present owned and occupied by Mrs. Essie Alspaw. Another part





**Peter Keesting, 1800-1869.**





Mrs. Margaret Keessling.  
1813-1876





of this building became a part of the residence owned and occupied by Jacob Zirkle until January 29, 1904, when it was destroyed by fire.

After much discussion the founders of the town decided to call it Mechanicsburg. Nearly every trade was represented. Among other names considered was that of Petersburg, which some proposed to call it in honor of Peter Keesling upon whose land the first business house was built. This building was erected by Samuel Keesling, Peter's eldest son, and he was assisted by Thomas Murry and Thomas Graham. The building stood in the corner of a field of stumps and deadened trees.

In this building Thomas Dunning opened the first store, probably in 1845. It occupied the present site of J. W. Goodwin's dry goods store. Thornton Rogers clerked for him. After a time Mr. Dunning sold his store to Washington Franklin, who continued the business, and with his family occupied the Mrs. N. A. Goodwin property. Later, Lewis Swain owned this store for a time.

As early as 1844 a blacksmith shop was located where L. W. Cooper's residence now stands. The charcoal used in the shop was burned by the blacksmith named Wm. Kepner, and Wm. Alexander. The pit was located on or near the site of J. W. Goodwin's barn. Later, Isaac Wampler, Wm. Alexander's son-in-law, had a blacksmith shop on the southeast corner, and lived in a two-story log house on the lot. He made plows, in addition to his other work.



Wm. Alspaw afterward occupied this corner with a blacksmith shop, and later Wm. Perry worked at the cooper trade in the same building. Wm. Wood owned a blacksmith shop on East street in 1853, and has worked continuously at his trade since that time. Some of our citizens remember how they, in childhood,

“Coming home from school  
Looked in at the open door,”

and in imagination again try to

“Catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from the threshing-floor.”

Wm. Wood's brother, John, learned the trade with him, and was a partner for a time. In 1863 their brother, Isaac Wood, came from Ohio and entered into a partnership with William which lasted until March, 1874.

January 10, 1849, Thomas B. Keesling bought of George Keesling about three acres of land comprising the lots from W. H. Keesling's lot on the north-west corner westward to John L. Swain's lot, inclusive. The consideration was \$25.00. July 14 of the same year Thomas Keesling was appointed first post-master of Mechanicsburg. He had built a residence on the corner lot, and in this he lived and kept the post-office. The mail was brought once a week from New Castle to Cadiz; was carried thence on horseback to Mechanicsburg, Ovid, Huntsville and Pendleton. Mr. Keesling is now living in San Jose, California.



Abel Sinnett was appointed first carrier of Mechanicsburg's first daily mail. This route was established between Mechanicsburg and Middletown in 1867 and Mr. Sinnett served almost continuously for sixteen years. Lewis Greenlee held a contract for four years but employed Mr. Sinnett a part of his term. He carried passengers and packages between the two towns. A farmer's wife or daughter rushing out and handing Mr. Sinnett a sample of calico or lace to match for her in town was a familiar sight to the passengers on the mail hack. In 1868 Mr. Sinnett and family moved into the toll-house one-half mile east of town where they lived for twenty-four years, the first and only keepers of that gate. Since 1892 they have kept a hotel in Mechanicsburg. Mr. Sinnett was married to Deborah Boram in February, 1862.

Milburn Keesling and Eliza Norman were married in 1852 and began housekeeping on the William Adamson farm. In 1854 they moved to Missouri where they remained four years. In 1883 they bought their present home which occupies the former site of the old "Skeeter" school house. Mr. Keesling and Mr. Sinnett each lived for a time in the cabin on Peter Keesling's farm. It was surrounded by an orchard of cherry trees which remained many years after the cabin had disappeared.



## CHURCHES

Before a church building had been erected the Methodists held their meetings in William Alexander's home. It was probably as early as 1843 that a hewed log church was built on George Keesling's land opposite the old cemetery. Four or five years later a storm carried the upper part of this building down the hill leaving the floor, and walls one log high, standing. Jacob Mogul was one of the trustees of the church, and Solomon Rigger and Stephen Norman were two local preachers. During the forties four ministers, named Stright, Heath, John Leach, and Matthew Fennemore, preached in the churches of the neighborhood. The Middletown circuit of the Methodist church included Mechanicsburg and the Bell church three miles west of town. In 1849 a Methodist camp-meeting was held in the Bonham woods where natural slopes formed a fine amphitheater.

In the summer of 1853 the German Baptists held their annual meeting in Peter Keesling's new barn.

Some time during the fifties a frame church was erected by the Methodists on the site of the one destroyed by storm. Many of our citizens remember attending church services and Sunday-school in this building. It was ceiled with wood, and had a large pillar in the center of the room. The S. S. library was kept in a little red case which stood directly beneath the high, old-fashioned pulpit. This case had been in the log church, and after the storm was found



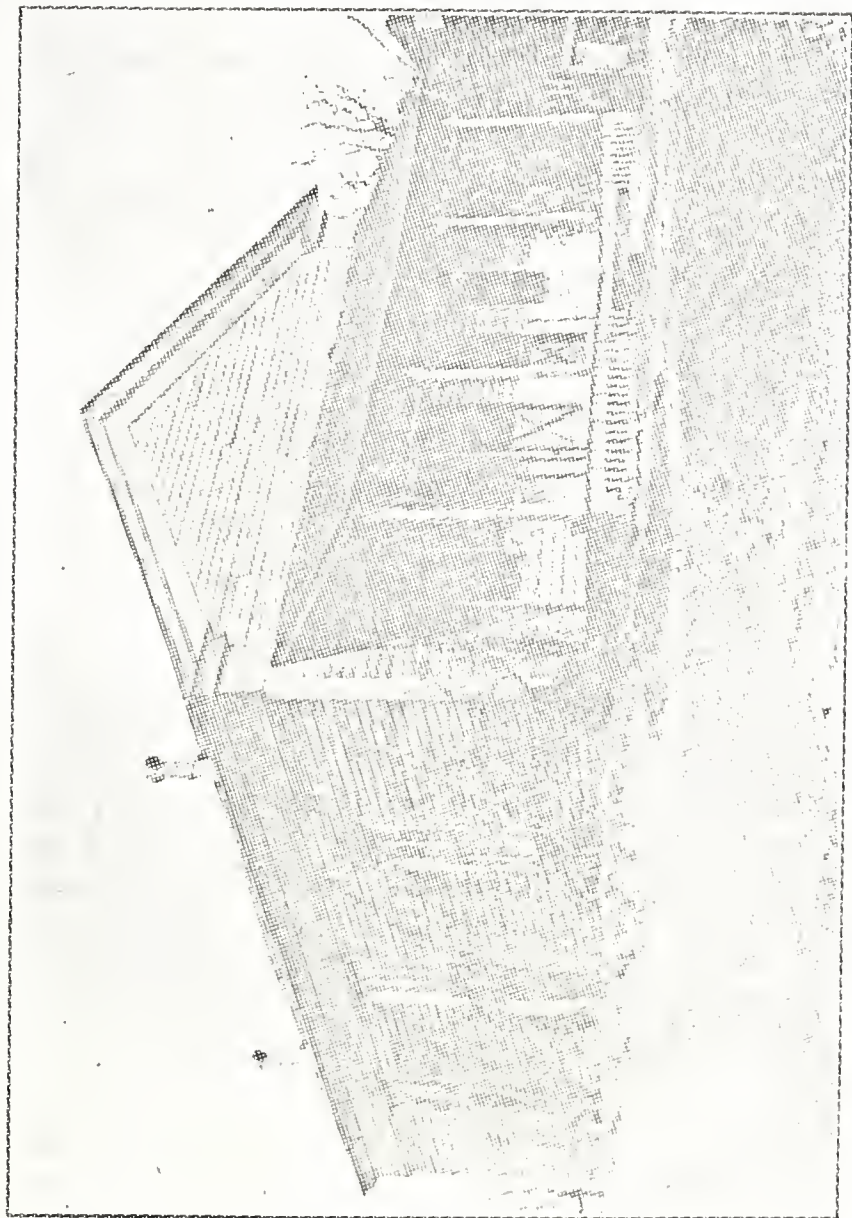


in its accustomed place. It had not been overturned even when the roof and walls had been lifted and carried away. Here on Sunday afternoons William Perry led a singing class, using the old figure notes. Here, too, occurred a thrilling adventure of Daniel Rent's childhood. Attending an evening service he grew sleepy. Creeping into a dark corner he was soon in a sound sleep from which he did not waken when the congregation was dismissed. Later, he awakened and found himself alone in the dark church with the white stones gleaming across the way. Climbing out through a window he rushed like the wind past the cemetery and across the little valley that lay between the church and the village.

Eli Rammel preached here in 1853; Benjamin Smith, in '55; Philip Stephens, in '56; M. P. Armstrong, '57; J. B. Birt, 1860; W. S. Bradford, '61. The latter resigned to serve in the Civil War; his successor, Nathaniel Brown, also gave up the work in a short time and entered the army. Next came J. H. McMahon in '62; W. E. McCarty, '63; D. F. Stright, '65; J. and O. S. Harrison, '68; William Anderson and E. Pierce, '69; William Anderson and W. H. Meissee, 1870 and '71; John Pierce, '72-74; F. A. Fish, '75 and '76; P. Carland, '77; J. Thomas, '78 and '80; C. Harvey, '81 and '82; R. B. Powell, '83-85; J. W. Lowery, '85 and '87; C. C. Cissell, '88.

A Methodist church was built at College Corner in 1888, and the meetings were then held at that





Mechanicsburg's First School House. Built in 1854.



place until the spring of <sup>1904</sup>~~94~~ when they were again moved to Mechanicsburg. The pastor for 1904 and 1905 was Rev. R. F. Smith; for 1906, F. J. Speck-ein. The brick church on North street was erected in 1873. It is a union church building in which any denomination has the right to hold services.

A Seventh-day Adventist congregation was organized here January 13, 1874, under the direction of Elder S. H. Lane. There were thirteen charter members. The membership was afterward increased to more than one hundred, but that number has been decreased by removal of memberships to other places, by deaths and various causes.

### OUR SCHOOLS.

Before the founding of Mechanicsburg, probably in the winter of 1835-6, Lewis Swain taught a term of school in a log house which stood at the eastern base of "the mound" on Miss Eve Keesling's place. A pear tree still standing marks the site. In the fall of 1836 Mrs. Susan Payne who lived in a cabin on John Bonham's farm, taught school in her little home of one room. Among the pupils who attended were John "Dan'l" Keesling, Mary Keesling (Lutholtz,) Susanna Swain (Weeks,) John Swain, Sallie Swain, Samuel, Harvey and Henry Keesling; Jane Keesling (Nash,) Benjamin, Martin and Olla Longbottom; William, Joseph, John and Rebecca Bills. After eating their noon lunch the



children would rush out to play in the leafy tops of the trees which Mr. Payne was felling about the house. John Swain and Mrs. Lutholtz, two of the pupils, furnish the information concerning these earliest schools. A little later, a school-house was built on Thomas Hasty's farm, on or near the site of Frank Zirkle's house. Some of the teachers here were William Swain, Levi Hasty, Mary Lewis (Small) and Martha Judd. This was a typical pioneer school-house with slabs resting on pins in the wall for writing desks, and slab benches for seats. The teacher was furnished a splint-bottom chair. Another school-house was built on Charles Mitchell's farm. The corner stones still mark the site.

In the summer of 1854 the first school-house was built in Mechanicsburg. The lot upon which it stood is now a gravel pit in the western edge of the town. The three trustees, Lewis Swain, James Wisehart and John Bonham, hired John F. Polk, then a young man twenty-one years of age, to teach the first term beginning November 28, 1854. There were two months of public school followed by two months of private school with more than one hundred pupils enrolled. Mr. Polk boarded at George Keesling's, and remembers that he paid for board and lodging \$2.50 per month. Among the older pupils were John Hackney Swain, Rice and Amos Keesling, Ezra and Andrew Henshaw, Marcus Bonham, Calvin Keesling, George and Mary Hasty, Hugh and Elmor Murphy, Win. and Henry Swain,





Margaret Beck and Christena Keesling. At this time W. H. Keesling's education had its beginning. His father took him to the school house and placed him in the hands of the teacher. There was a short-lived rebellion on the part of the new pupil when his father left the room. Commencing in July of the following summer Mr. Polk taught a term of six weeks for small children of whom there were seventy in attendance. For four successive winters he taught here, then one in the old "Seminary" at New Castle, then returned and taught another term in 1859-60. He again returned and taught during the winter of 1868-9. During an interview, Mr. Polk recalled many incidents connected with his career in Mechanicsburg. Among others was one that proved embarrassing to the new teacher who was sensitive about his youthful appearance. At a noon recess, only a few days after he began his first term, he went into Elliott and Swain's store to get chalk. He noticed the men were listening attentively to a man whom he afterward learned was Charles Mitchell, the father of L. P. Mitchell. He was talking about the incompetence of a certain teacher, and, noticing the strange youth who had just entered, ended his remarks by saying, "The man is no more fit to teach school than this boy would be." Mr. Polk gave vivid descriptions of the old-fashioned spelling-schools—occasions that taxed the ingenuity of the young teacher to keep down rowdyism.

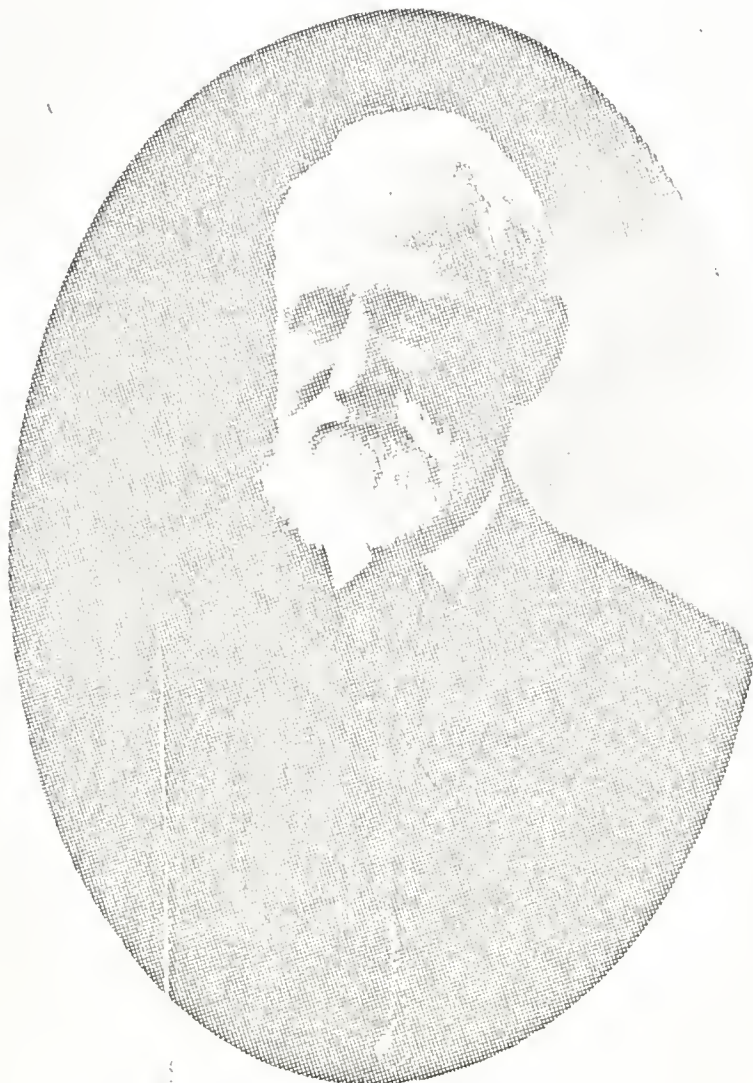


David Hunt, assisted by his sister-in-law, Melissa Elliott (Pennington), taught during the summer of 1859, and it is probable that he taught the previous winter while Mr. Polk was at New Castle. Mr. Hunt lived where Daniel Rent now lives and had a car in which he and Mrs. Hunt made daguerreotype pictures.

Mr. Polk left in the spring of 1860. No record can be found for 1860-1 or for 1862-3, but some of our citizens remember that about this time John Needham, Ezra and Andrew Henshaw, and William Watkins taught here. Benjamin Rogers, of Pendleton, and Marcus Benham taught 1861-2. In the spring of '63, just after receiving his discharge from service in the Civil War, Moses Bowers taught a term. He also taught in 1863-64 and '64-'65, closing his last term in June, 1865. In his work he was assisted by his wife who won the love and confidence of the children in an unusual degree. At the close of the winter term in 1864, Miss Jane Weeden, a friend of Mrs. Bowers, came to attend a school "exhibition." She wrote some rhymes concerning the pupils and citizens which were read on that occasion. Copies of these verses are extant. Mrs. Bowers died in September, 1905.

In the fall of 1865 Mary Tyler taught and was assisted by her sister, Sarah. Then Sarah went to the Painter school and taught during the winter while Mattie Jones (Charles) took her place here.





John F. Polk.



as assistant. The following summer Miss Tyler, who was a woman of strong personality and one who inspired her pupils with an ambition to make the most of their opportunities, taught a term for advanced pupils—a "select school." The old church on the hill was used for a school-room. The following pupils attended:—Mary Keesling-Wood, Sarah Miller, Sarah Weeks-Huston, Charity Wischart-Davis, Elizabeth Wischart-Franklin, Mary Beck-Ellis, Sarah Perry-Rent, Nannie Tucker-Pudding, Sarah Williams-Rent, America Williams-Gipe, Mattie Fatic-Keesling, Leander P. Mitchell, Charles Wood, John Hasty, Calvin Franklin.

The list of teachers from this date until the present time is as follows:—

Ezra Buffkin and Bettie Keesling, 1866-7; Walter Boor and L. P. Mitchell taught the first term in the two-story frame building in '67-68; John F. Polk, Anthony S. Huston, '68-69; L. P. Mitchell, W. H. Keesling, '69-70; Enos Adamson, Sarah A. Weeks 1870-71; Harvey Hollenbeck, Emma Cook '71-72; Enos Adamson, Sarah Weeks '72-73; A. S. Huston, Sarah Weeks-Huston '73-74; Henry A. Lennard, Henry Fatic '74-75; Henry Lennard, Sarah Huston '75-76; Henry Lennard, Elizabeth Weeks '76-77; George L. Swain, Nettie Vanwinkle '77-78; A. J. Larue, Elizabeth Weeks '78-79. Mr. Larue resigned and Joseph Painter was employed to finish the term. C. B. Pondkton, Elizabeth Weeks '79-80; W. W. Prigg, Elizabeth Weeks 1880-81;





Lartin R. Ginn, Elizabeth Weeks '82-83 and '83-84; W. W. Prigg, Hattie Cooper '84-85; W. W. Prigg, Cora Brown and Ada Lipes '85-86; W. W. Prigg, Charles A. Pendleton '86-87. Mary Waters and Alice Goyer taught the first term in the brick school building, '87-88; W. W. Prigg, O. M. Keesling, '88-89; Emily Weeks, O. M. Keesling '89-90; Emily Weeks, Vienna Unthank 1890-91; W. O. Bowers, Laura Bowers '91-92; John W. Kendall, Lulu Rohrback '92-93; J. W. Kendall, Lizzie Quigley '94-95; O. M. Keesling, Lizzie Quigley '95-96, also '96-97 and '97-98; Thomas A. Barrett, Lizzie Quigley '98-99; T. A. Barrett, Dottie Pendleton 99-1900; C. C. Hardesty, Mary Quigley 1900-1 and 1901-2; O. M. Keesling, Gertrude Seaford 1902-3, 1903-4, 1904-5; S. C. Brown, Gertrude Seaford 1905-6; S. C. Brown, Hallie Painter 1906-7.

Many interesting facts are recorded in an old "Record of Proceedings of District School Meetings." The school director called meetings of the legal voters to select the teachers. The school director was chosen annually in the same way. The first record made in this book was of a meeting held October 6, 1866, at which Frederick Kent was chosen director to succeed Isaac Wood. The objects of a meeting held November 3, 1866, were, as the minutes tell us, "to decide the practicability of repairing the school-house [the old one-story frame building] for the winter school and to designate a teacher. Voted that the following repairs will be



necessary: Walls to be plastered with one coat where the plastering is off; door repaired; stove flue rebuilt; dirt banked up around the house so as to thoroughly underpin it, and eight benches to be made. Harvey Keesling agreeing to do the repairing as above for the sum of \$23.00, the work to be done by December 1, 1866." The late Dr. George Hasty served as secretary for these two meetings.

Frederick Rent, school director, gave notice that he would sell the school house at public auction to the highest bidder, June 1, 1867. On that date the building now occupied by John L. Swain as a residence was sold for \$80.00 to Wm. Perry, who acted as agent for the Order of Good Templars. Wm. Prigg, Sr., was the auctioneer. A new two-story frame building was erected, on the site of the old one, during the summer of 1867.

Among the names of the men who took part in the school meetings in the sixties we find the following:—Dr. George Hasty, Lewis Swain, Isaac Franklin, N. R. Elliott, Dr. Wm. Reed, Dr. Joseph Weeks, Dr. James Beck, John C. Goodwin, John R. Elliott, W. R. Miller, Thomas J. Ginn, Isaac Wood, John Alspaw, Wm. McCurdy, Elibu Swain, and John Swain. The record gives the following list of directors:—Isaac Wood, 1865; Frederick Rent, '66; J. D. Farrell, '67; William Perry, '68; William McCurdy, '69; W. R. Miller, 1870; Job Ginn, '71; Isaac Wood, '72; W. R. Miller, '73-'74; C. W. Wood, '79; James McCormack, 1880; C. B.



Pendleton, '81-'83; W. H. Keesling, '83. Since the latter date the township trustee has appointed the director, and Mr. Keesling has continued to serve until 1904 when he resigned and was succeeded by Homer Wood.

A steam saw mill was built in 1850 by Thomas B. Keesling, Elihu and Ezra Swain. It was run the first time on July 4th of that year. The machinery was bought of Chandler and Davis, Indianapolis; and was brought from that city on trucks. At the time a circular saw superceeded the old-fashioned "sash" saw the three owners were John R. Elliott, Amos Kisling, and William McCormack. Mr. Kisling sold his interest to Martin Pring in 1872. William McCormack sold his interest to James McCormack in the spring of '73. Martin Pring sold his interest to representatives of a patent water-carrier, and Elliott and McCormack soon bought this interest. In 1882 or '83, McCormack sold to Elliott who now became sole owner. This was one among the first steam saw mills built in the county. Previous to the building of this mill, George Keesling had built a water-power saw mill near his home. It was built about 1842, and was operated for several years when there was sufficient water. The dam, of which there are still traces, afforded fine skating for the boys during the winter. John Swain, Sr., had built a saw mill in 1836 and a flour mill in '39 on Fall Creek, north of town. The saw mill was abandoned about 1858. The flour mill was





Mrs. Elizabeth Reesling—"Aunt Betsey."  
1806--1876.







Mrs. Mary Keesling-Lutholtz.



replaced by a new building in 1866. The owners at that time were Lewis Swain and John Swain, Jr. This mill was burned Dec. 17, 1904.

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## PERSONAL BIOGRAPHIES.

JOHN R. ELLIOTT came to Mechanicsburg about 1850. He worked at the carpenter trade until 1854, when he began work in the saw mill with which he was connected for forty years. Mr. Elliott died in 1904. Mrs. Elliott still lives in the old home on East Street.

ELIHU SWAIN, in 1851, had the house built which he occupied until his death in 1875. John R. Elliott was one of the carpenters. Mr. Swain was one of the three men who built the saw mill. For a number of years he was in partnership with N. R. Elliott in a dry goods store. Mrs. Swain died in 1900. / 890

NIMROD R. ELLIOTT moved to Mechanicsburg in 1851 and worked at the carpenter trade for a year or two, then opened a little store. Soon he and Ezra Swain entered into a partnership which lasted seven years. Then Elihu Swain was a partner for a number of years. I. W. Cooper was in partnership with Mr. Elliott from 1873 until 1891. Mr. Elliott finally retired from the mercantile business in 1894. His first store was burned in 1863. A frame building was moved to the site of the



burned one, and in six weeks Mr. Elliott was again selling goods. This latter building gave place in 1868 to the brick building now occupied by Scott Lewis' dry goods and and grocery store. Mr. Elliott's death occurred in January, 1905. Mrs. Elliott still resides in the home on West Street.

THOMAS B. KEESLING, in 1852, built a house on West Street. This he soon sold to James Small who occupied it until 1857 when he sold to Dr. Joseph Weeks.

WM. B. McWILLIAMS in 1852, lived in the house which stood just east of T. B. Keeslings. He was a harness-maker, and worked in a shop on the same lot. He sold to John Kelly who sold to Calvin F. Keesling. In 1864 C. F. Keesling sold to William Alspaw, who, in turn, sold to Mrs. Anne Swain, in 1866. Lewis Greenlee bought this property in 1869 and resided here until 1880 when he sold to W. A. Greenly who, the same year, sold to Levi M. Keesling. Mr. Keesling owned it until 1892 when he sold to Dr. Weeks. The house was moved to the east side of the lot, remodeled for an office, and occupied by Dr. Elizabeth Weeks until 1901 when it was burned.

EZRA SWAIN, from 1844 to 1850 was connected with the Swain flour mill. In 1850 he, in partnership with others, built the saw mill. It was probably in '52 that he and N. R. Elliott opened a lit-



the store with a combined cash capital of \$300. This partnership lasted seven years. Then after farming one year, Mr. Swain bought the store and residence on the north-east corner. This property he sold to John C. Goodwin and Isaac Franklin in 1865, and in April of that year moved to Noblesville. Mr. Swain died in April, 1898; Mrs. Swain in February, 1902.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER moved from the log house built when he entered his land, into a new two-story frame house in 1853. This house is where Mrs. N. R. Elliott now lives.

ELZA SWAIN lived here from 1850-54. He built the house which Job Ginn now owns and occupies. This property he sold to William Sharp and moved to Liberty, Indiana, where he enlisted in the Civil War. He gave up his life in defending the Union.

JOSHUA CRISHER came in the early fifties. He was a cabinet-maker, and made burial caskets. For many years they kept hotel on South Street. They moved to Knightstown, where Mr. Crisher died.

JOHN ALSPA, also a cabinet-maker, came from Ohio in 1856. He died in 1905 at the age of ninety-one.

FREDERICK RENT on the first day of the year 1852 moved with his family from Ohio, to which state he had come from Pennsylvania. Both parents and

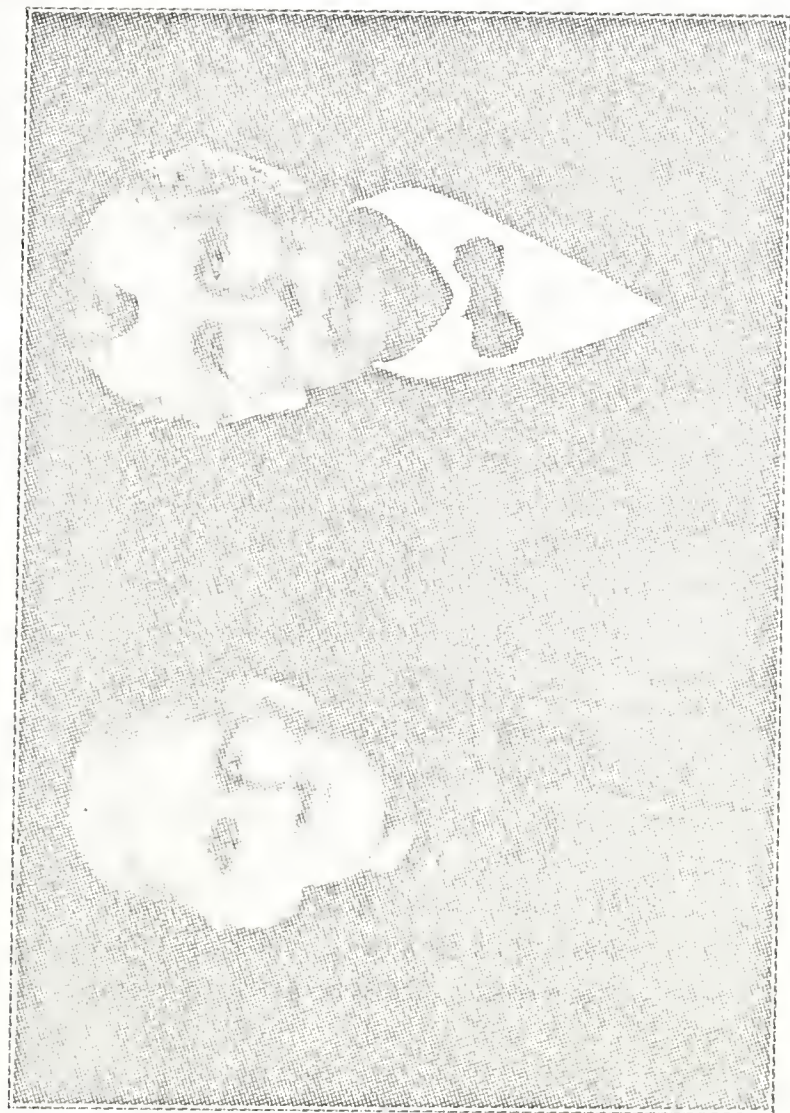




children used the German language. He bought property of John P. Cooper, and added two rooms to the house one of which he used for a shoe-shop. Here Mr. Rent lived and worked, with the exception of the time he spent in defending the Union, until his death which occurred in 1871. Mrs. Rent lived until 1889. Who among the children of their old neighbors does not remember the bird and animal cookies with which "Granny Rent" added to their Christmas joys?

WILLIAM WOOD and Betsey Tucker were married in 1853. As soon as the new home, already begun, could be finished they moved into the house which has been their home for more than half a century. Mrs. Wood remembers that John D. Cooper, familiarly known as "Tine," had built the "Grandfather Mann house" and had moved into it only three days before she came to her new home: that Thomas B. Keesling had built and was occupying the Weeks home; that Mr. Maloney, a tailor, was occupying the first house east of T. B. Keesling's; that Ezra Swain lived in the W. R. Miller house; that Havilah Adamson, Wm. Alexander's son-in-law, lived in a cottage which stood on the site of W. H. Keesling's residence; that Dr. Hopkins lived where Mrs. Sarah Keesling now lives; Geo. White had just built and moved into the house which Dr. William Reed afterward owned and occupied; N. R. Eliott lived where I. W. Cooper now lives; Joshua





Mr. and Mrs. William Wood,



Crisher, Hiram Brattain and Jackson Wischart lived on South Street; Washington Franklin lived in the Mrs. N. A. Goodwin property.

DR. JAMES BECK came to Mechanicsburg in April, 1854, and lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Kezia Upp. He was appointed Post-Master June, 1856, and served until October, '62. In 1872 he moved to Fairmount, and thence to Elwood where he died in 1882. Mrs. Beck died at Kokomo, February 2, 1900.

LEWIS GREENLEE married Marietta Wood and moved to Mechanicsburg in 1854. They moved away in '54 but returned in '64. They went to Markleville in 1880 at which place Mr. Greenlee died in 1900. Mrs. Greenlee now resides in Middletown.

JOHN C. GOODWIN came to Mechanicsburg about 1855 and entered into partnership with L. G. Greenlee in the shoe business. He and Isaac Franklin in 1865, bought Ezra Swain's store. Mr. Franklin was Post-Master and kept the Office in the store. In 1868 Mr. Goodwin became sole owner and continued the business until his death which occurred in 1870. Then Samuel H., the eldest son, assumed charge until ill health compelled him to give up work. Charles S., the second son, returned from Beloit, Wis., where he had received mercantile training and took charge of the



store in 1876. A new brick building was erected on the site of the old store in 1880, and in 1882 the firm name became N. A. Goodwin & Sons. In 1879 Charles was married to Lizzie E. Swain. His death occurred in January, 1886. Mrs. Goodwin now resides in New Castle. John W. Goodwin the third son has continued the business. He married Lucy McCormack, and they began housekeeping in the John L. Swain property. He bought his present home on North Street in 1885. Mr. Goodwin ordered four rocking chairs for the holiday trade in 1880. Selling these he sent in larger orders and was so successful in this line that he bought W. R. Miller's stock of furniture and later that of David Weaver. From this small beginning grew the furniture store located in the building erected by Mr. Goodwin on West Street in 1902. Mrs. Goodwin died May 30, 1907. Mrs. Nancy Goodwin still resides in the house which has been her home since 1869.

JONATHAN M. LEWIS in '56 built the house now occupied by Abel Simmett and after living in it four years sold to Calvin F. Keesling. Mr. Lewis was a carpenter and built a number of houses in town. For many years past he has lived on his farm southeast of town.

DR. JOSEPH WEEKS began practicing medicine in 1847. He was married to Susanna Swain in 1849. He moved to Mechanicsburg in '56 and





the following year bought the home in which he still resides. Mrs. Weeks died July 2, 1901. A number of successful physicians were students in his office at Mechanicsburg. Among them were Drs. William Reed, George Hasty, John Needham, T. W. Gronendyke, J. M. Thurston, C. E. Wood, W. M. Rix, F. L. Stone, A. S. Huston, C. B. Pendleton, J. O. Lowman, Elizabeth Weeks, W. D. McCormack.

JOE GINN and Elizabeth Rent were married in 1858 and began housekeeping in the home which they still occupy. Mr. Ginn was one of the early carpenters whose substantial work is still in evidence.

DR. W. M. RIX married Catherine Miller in 1864. They moved from here in 1873 or '74 and were living in Muncie at the time of Dr. Rix's death.

DR. GEORGE HASTY's boyhood was spent on his father's farm. Sometime during the fifties he studied medicine under Dr. Weeks. In 1860 he was elected to a professorship in the Cincinnati Physio-Medical Institute. He practiced medicine in Mechanicsburg until 1872 when he moved to Indianapolis where he was one of the founders of the Physio-Medical College of Indiana. Dr. Hasty was connected with this college almost continuously until his death which occurred in 1905. Mrs. Hasty still lives in Indianapolis.



GEORGE WHITE married Elizabeth Keesling. After living in Mechanicsburg a few years they moved to Hamilton County but afterward returned and bought the John Keesling farm. They lived here until 1879 when they moved to Kansas. Mr. White died in 1900. Mrs White resides in Topeka.

WILLIAM R. MILLER, in 1859. moved into the house which is his present home. For many years he manufactured pumps and chairs. He also had an undertaking establishment in connection with his other work. His son L. O. Miller was in partnership with him for several years. The Miller home was a favorite stopping place with the early "circuit riders" of the M. E. church. Mrs. Miller died in October, 1904.

JACOB BROWN, a wagon maker, was located on West Street during the fifties. He sold to Lindley Allen. Moses Lindamood, also a wagon maker, was here a little later. During the fifties there lived in town Burriss Personett a carpenter, James Wood a blacksmith, Joseph Groves a tinner, John D. Cooper and John P. Cooper, both carpenters, Hiram Short a mechanic.

DR. WILLIAM REED moved from Warrington and practiced medicine from 1864 to '72. Afterward he looked after his farming interests altho he continued to reside in his home on East Street until his





Ezra Swain. 1822-1898.



death which occurred February, 1901. Mrs. Reed died in 1894.

IMLA W. COOPER began work as salesman in N. R. Elliott's store, March, 1866. The following year he married Sarah E. Hunt and they began housekeeping in a cottage west of Elliott's store. This building has since been converted into a ware-room. After a clerkship of seven years Mr. Cooper entered into a partnership with Mr. Elliott which lasted eighteen years. They built their present home in 1883.

JAMES D. FARRELL came to Mechanicsburg in September, '66. He had a drug store on the north-west corner and resided in the house now occupied by Mrs. N. R. Elliott. Mr. Farrell and family returned to Middletown September, '68. There were two successive drug stores on this corner between the years 1868 and 1871, the first belonging to John Trout the second to Ezra and Samuel Bufkin.

AMOS KISLING worked in his father's saw mill and on the home farm until his enlistment in the Civil War. Later he bought an interest in the steam saw mill in town. He was married to Rhoda M. Swain in 1867 and the following year built their present home. Mr. Kisling devotes much attention to fruit-growing.

DANIEL RENT worked at the carpenter trade both before and after his service in the Civil War.





In 1869 he married Sarah Williams who died in '72. They began housekeeping in a cottage on the site of his present home which was built in '88. Mr. Rent was married to Sarah C. Graham in '74. He was appointed Post-Master in '98 and served until the Post-Office was abolished in 1907.

DR. JOHN NEEDHAM was married to Christena Keesling in '58. They moved to Mechanicsburg in '60 where he studied medicine in the office of Drs. Weeks and Hasty; in '62 located at New Castle; in '86 moved to California where he died July, 1904.

DAVID HODSON, a harness-maker, married Sarah Tarkleson and lived on North Street during the sixties. They moved to Anderson where Mr. Hodson died a number of years ago. Mrs. Hodson died in 1907.

WILLIAM McCURDY, a harness-maker, served in the Civil War. He moved to Markleville in 1887 where he died December, 1900. Mrs. McCurdy died in May, 1907.

ISAAC WOOD, a blacksmith, came with his family from Ohio in 1863 and resided in the house now occupied by Abel Sinnett. He worked in partnership with William Wood until 1874. He then studied and practiced medicine. Their son Charles E. studied medicine, but practiced only a short time when his work was ended by death in 1874.

ENOS ADAMSON lived on his farm north of town



but taught a number of school terms here during the seventies. He was the first Superintendent of the Henry County Schools. It was probably in '72 that he was elected Superintendent to succeed Clarkson Davis who was the last man to hold the office of County Examiner. Mr. Adamson introduced the graded system into the district schools and was severely censured by many of the teachers for "trying to introduce city methods into country schools." His work stands justified today. Mr. Adamson died in 1875. Mrs. Adamson is still living.

DR. WILLIAM R. SWAIN lived here during the seventies. He served as post-master from April 1878 to September, '79. His death occurred September 8, 1879. Mrs. Swain died in 1900.

CALVIN F. KEESLING married Martha White and located in Mechanicsburg. In 1860 he bought and occupied the house built by Jonathan M. Lewis. Later he lived on East Street. He moved to Hamilton County but returned in 1875 and bought the Nathan Murphy place. They lived here until 1880 when they went to Noblesville where they still reside.

RILEY ALEXANDER married Amanda Alspaw and during the sixties lived where Daniel Rent now lives. Mr. Alexander served in the Civil War. They now reside in Fulton County.



JAMES ALEXANDER married Ellen, daughter of Wm. Alspaw. He lost his life in the Civil War. Mrs. Alexander afterward married W. H. Eiler an attorney, and now lives at Warsaw, Indiana.

CYRUS WOOD came to Mechanicsburg in October, 1867, and went into partnership with Lewis Greenlee; was married to Mary Keesling, in 1869; built the house now owned by Charles F. Keesling in 1874, and lived there until 1897 when he built their present home. He opened a harness shop in 1882 which he sold to Scott Lewis in 1906. Recently Mr. Wood is devoting his attention to his farming interests.

JOHN L. SWAIN, son of Elza Swain, came to Mechanicsburg soon after the close of the Civil War in which he served. He was married to Rebecca Alspaw, October, 1869. For many years he has followed his trade as plasterer and brick-layer.

WILLIAM H. KEESLING taught in the Mechanicsburg school as assistant to L. P. Mitchell in 1869-'70. In October, 1870, he was married to Sarah J. Cooper who died June, 1881. Mr. Keesling opened a grocery store September 1, 1871, on the northwest corner in the building erected by T. B. Keesling in 1849. During the summer of 1871 the building had been lengthened and the I. O. O. F. had added a second story to be used as a hall. Five years later, Mr. Keesling added a hardware department in an adjoining building. This build-



ing had been moved to its present site and was originally the two-story farm house of George Keesling. Both buildings and a large part of the stock of goods was burned in the disastrous fire of December 1901. Mr. Keesling continued business in the Odd Fellows' Block on South Street until 1905 when he removed his goods to the south-east corner, his present location. He lived for a number of years in a cottage on the site of his present home which was built in 1884. W. H. Keesling was married to Nan Janett Miller February 18, 1883.

DR. JOHN E. CANADAY in November, 1872, came to Mechanicsburg to succeed the late Dr. George Hasty who was moving to Indianapolis. Dr. Canaday remembers that he came the day after General Grant was elected president. He bought the home which Dr. Hasty had built, and remained in Mechanicsburg until after the death of Mrs. Canaday which occurred in 1874. Dr. Canaday afterward abandoned the profession of medicine for business and is now a member of the firm of Ritchie, Stein and Canaday, furniture dealers at Anderson.

JACOB FATIC, a stock buyer, married Margaret Beck. They sold the farm which Isaac Myer now owns and built, in 1872, the brick residence which was their home until Mr. Fatic's death in 1898.

ANTHONY S. HUSTON was married to Sarah A.





Weeks November, 1872; bought and moved into the Rent property in '73; studied medicine; moved to Pendleton in 1876 where he remained until '89 when he located in Anderson. Dr. Huston died December, 1894.

GEORGE D. RENT and Sarah Perry were married in 1868, but soon moved near Pendleton, Indiana, where they are still living.

JAMES McCORMACK, in the spring of 1873, bought an interest in the saw mill and moved to town; in '74 bought Dr. Canaday's property and moved into it; in '82 or '83 sold his interest in the mill to John R. Elliott, and in '85 moved to Cadiz. Mr. and Mrs. McCormack are now living at Kennard.

DR. F. L. STONE studied medicine in Dr. Weeks' office, and located here in August, 1874. He left in '79, but returned in 1885 and remained until December, 1889, when they moved to Pendleton their present home. Dr. Stone married Anna Swain.

JOHN GREENLEE came from Franklin County in 1869. He bought J. C. Goodwin's property on North Street and resided there until he moved to Elwood in '79. Mr. Greenlee died in 1902, and Mrs. Greenlee survived him only a few months.

MICHAEL MANN came to Mechanicsburg in 1865 or '66. Mrs. Mann died in 1870. A few years later Mr. Mann married Mrs. Sarah Hawkins. After her death "Grandfather" went to live with relatives.



and his life was almost rounded out to a century.

WILLIAM HINSHAW sold his farm north of town and, in January, 1876, moved to the "Rent property," bought of A. S. Huston. Mr. Hinshaw died in May of the same year, and his wife, Mary Key-Hinshaw, died August, 1897. The two daughters, Eliza and Jennie Hinshaw still live in this home.

WILLIAM A. GREENLEE married Isadore Keesling. He owned a shoe shop, and served as postmaster from 1876-78. Mr. Greenlee is now a harness dealer in Middletown.

LEVI M. KEESLING was in Kentucky from 1875 to '77. He was salesman in W. H. Keesling's store from 1879 to 1895. He moved to Middletown in '95 and is there engaged in the grocery business.

DAVID WEAVER, a cabinet-maker, came to Mechanicsburg in August, 1879, and moved to Wilkinson in '86. He now resides in Middletown.

LUTHER O. MILLER married Florence Wood in 1878; lived in the John C. Goodwin property and later in the property now occupied by Abel Sinnett. They moved to Middletown in 1892, and recently located in Muncie. Mr. Miller is a contractor and builder.

GEORGE W. UPP and family came from Ohio to Indiana in 1872 and moved to Mechanicsburg in



1878. Mr. Upp, who had served in the Civil War, died in 1879. Mrs. Upp is still living on East Street.

J. M. NEWKIRK came to Mechanicsburg in 1879 and remained until '89. Captain Newkirk died in Yorktown, Indiana, July 26, 1906. Mrs. Newkirk resides in Anderson.

WILLIAM D. BROWN, a blacksmith, came in 1873. He married Emma L., daughter of Enos Adarson. They lived here from 1878 until 1880. They now reside in Middletown.

ALONZO BROWN came here in the winter of 1879 and for more than a year carried the mail between this place and Middletown. They lived at Mackleville a short time then returned and Mr. Brown clerked in Dr. Moore's drug store. He soon bought the store and kept it until '93, when he sold the stock of goods to Allen Fatic. Mr. Brown and family reside on South Street in the home built in 1905.

DR. CURTIS B. PENDLETON studied medicine in the office of Dr. Weeks and attended the Physio-Medical College of Indiana. He began the practice of medicine in 1880. He married Flora Reed and commenced housekeeping on East Street. Then they moved to the house now occupied by Mrs. Sarah Keesling where they lived until 1887. That year he built a residence on North Street which, in 1903, he sold to Dr. W. L. Misener. He then



built a home on his farm west of town where they now reside.

DR. JOHN W. MOORE married Bettie Keesling in 1869. He came from New Castle and began to practice medicine here in February, 1880. He lived where Abel Sinnott now lives and had a drug store and office on West Street. September, 1885, he returned to New Castle where Mrs. Moore died. Dr. Moore is now located at Mexico, Indiana.

DR. ELIZABETH WEEKS studied medicine in her father's office. She graduated from the Physio-Medical College of Indiana, in 1886 after which she practiced medicine in Mechanicsburg. Her death occurred in August, 1904.

JACOB ZIRKLE married Mary Williams April, 1881. They began housekeeping in the fall of that year in a house which stood east of their present home but upon the same lot. Mr. and Mrs. Zirkle took charge of the local switch-board of the Mechanicsburg, Markleville and Emporia Telephone Co. March 14, 1901, and still hold the position. Their home, in which the telephone switch-board was located, was burned January, 1904, and was immediately rebuilt.

CURTIS ELLIOTT and Laura Lovett were married in 1883 and went to housekeeping on East Street. Mr. Elliott died in 1890, and Mrs. Elliott in 1893.

B. K. PICKERING and Cora Wood were married





in 1893. They moved to Noblesville in November '98, and returned to Mechanicsburg in March, 1907.

CHARLES F. KEESLING was married to Minnie Showalter in 1884 and the following year moved to Mechanicsburg. After spending nearly two years in Minnesota they returned and Mr. Keesling worked at the carpenter trade from '88 to '98. He bought the Cyrus Wood property in '97. He bought James Ellison's store on the south-east corner. In 1904-5 he erected a large business building and occupied the first floor with a general store. The second floor was purchased by the I. O. R. M. Mr. Keesling sold his interest to Scott Lewis in the spring of '97 and moved to Oakland California.

GEORGE COOPER and Minnie McCurdy were married in 1880. They lived for a time in the John L. Swain property. Their present home is at Geneva, Indiana.

CURTIS REED married Anna Brown and began housekeeping on East Street. He built a home there in 1887 which he sold to U. G. Lewis in '95. They then moved to their farm west of town.

THOMAS ARTHUR GOODWIN was married to Georgiana Howard in 1888. They built a home on North Street in 1890, and moved to Indianapolis, their present home, in September, 1900.

SAMUEL COOPER and Nannie Smith were married in 1890. They are now living in Pendleton.



EVE KEESLING, daughter of George and Elizabeth Keesling, in 1878 built a home on North Street which she occupied until her death, in May, 1907. Her mother, "Aunt Betsey" as she was affectionately called by all the neighbors, died August, 1876.

AMBROSE E. PINK lived in Mechanicsburg for a few years then returned to Tyner City, Ind., where he owns an onion farm.

SERANUS B. WERFIELD came to Mechanicsburg and helped drill our first gas well in 1888. He married Jessie Cooper and they kept house on North Street until 1902 when they bought their present home, the Elihu Swain property.

JOE N. COOPER devoted his attention to farming and stock raising. He married Laura Trueblood and they began housekeeping where John Farmer now lives. They afterward moved to South Street where they lived until Mr. Cooper's death September 16, 1904. Mrs. Cooper now lives in the home which she built on East Street in 1905.

WILLIAM H. CUMMINS served as salesman in N. R. Elliott's store for a few years and later was with the Lewis Brothers. He married Mearle Cooper and they began housekeeping on East Street but soon bought and moved into the Thomas Hasty house. Mr. Cummins and the Lewis Brothers engaged in the buggy and farm implement trade.



and in 1897 he bought U. G. Lewis' interest in the dry goods store. In 1903 he began work as traveling salesman for a carriage company and moved to Richmond in August, 1906, where he is interested in a carriage factory.

WILLIAM ELLISON moved to Mechanicsburg March, 1894, but continued to look after his farm for a time. Their daughter, Esta, died May, 1900. Mrs. Ellison died May, 1902. Mr. Ellison was engaged for a time in the dry goods business, and clerked in Lewis' store for awhile. He had charge of the mail hack for several years and was serving when the Star Route was discontinued. Mr. Ellison was married to Miss Mattie Painter in 1906 and moved to his farm near Middletown.

JAMES ELLISON married Mary Elliott. He clerked for N. R. Elliott and later owned a store on the south-east corner. He afterward moved to Markleville where he owned a store. Mr. Ellison is now farming in southern Indiana.

WILLIAM WISEHEART, a veteran of the Civil War, has been a resident of Mechanicsburg for a number of years.

WALTER LOWERY came to town February, 1892. He bought the "Grandfather Mann house" and occupied it until it was destroyed by fire January, 1904.

EVERETT BROWN married Dora Cook and began housekeeping in the house which his grandfather



had built in 1851. Mr. Brown now lives in Broad Ripple, Indiana.

SCOTT LEWIS married Laura Cook and after farming for a time moved to Mechanicsburg in 1894 where he and his brother U. G. Lewis had bought the N. R. Elliott store. They, in partnership with W. H. Cummins, put up a building adjoining the store and began to deal in vehicles and farming implements. U. G. Lewis sold his interest to the others in 1897. W. H. Cummins retired in 1904 leaving Scott Lewis sole proprietor. Since then Mr. Lewis has put up another building and enlarged his stock. In the spring of 1907 Mr. Lewis bought Charles F. Keesling's store.

ULYSSES G. LEWIS married Lucy Keesling; was in partnership with Scott Lewis from 1894 until 1897; bought Curtis Reed's property on East Street in 1895 and resided there until 1897 when he sold his interest in the store and moved to Markleville. Mr. Lewis died September, 1897.

FRANK STROUGH was married to Orie Kent, 1899. They went to housekeeping 1901, in the cottage north of Amos Kisting's. In 1903 they bought the T. A. Goodwin property and have since resided there.

WILLIS ESTELL came to Mechanicsburg in 1895. They now live in the W. H. Cummins property, which he bought in 1906.





EDWARD HENDRICKS, a blacksmith, came in 1896. He recently built a residence and a shop on East Street.

JOHN FARMER came to town in 1897, and bought the house on East Street in which he is still living.

CALVIN W. KEESLING moved to town in 1901. They bought a home on East Street.

GILBERT BROWN, the barber, was married to Mary Huston in 1901. They are living in the W. M. Ellison property which they bought in 1906.

DR. WALTER L. MISENER came to Mechanicsburg April 2, 1901. He was married to Daisy Summers June 12 of the same year. They began house-keeping in the T. A. Goodwin house, but soon bought the J. C. Goodwin cottage which they occupied until 1903. Then they purchased Dr. Pendleton's residence on North Street.

WILLIS TEETER was married to Lucy Lewis in 1902, and came to Mechanicsburg in 1903. Mr. Teeter has been employed as salesman in Scott Lewis's store since 1904.

FRANK MUSDILL married Mary Heaton in 1898. They came to town in 1903, and have since resided in the Fatic home.

MRS. SARAH KEESLING bought her present home in 1903.



JOHN ALBRIGHT moved from his farm to a home on East Street in 1903. Mrs. Albright died July 7, 1907.

CURTIS GRAHAM and Aurilla Coon were married in 1905. They lived for a time on East Street but are now occupying the Charles F. Keesling property.

Dr. H. E. MISENER came to Mechanicsburg in 1907, and is living on North Street.

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Among the people who have been residents of the town, and have not already been mentioned, are the physicians--Rush, Jones, Mitchell, McKillup, Anderson, Oldham, Culipher; carpenters--Joseph Nicodemus, Thomas Ginn, James Ginn, James Small, John Rent, John Gipe, Daniel Davis; wagon-makers--Evan Jones, Noab McCormack, Henry Gipe, Mr. Fann; blacksmiths--James Wood, Michael Davis, Peter Crisher, Robert Trout, O. S. Coffin, Jesse Templeton, C. Siders; shoe-makers--Isaac Nicodemus (now of Fairmount) William Goodwin, Cyrus Mays, Adolphus Lynch, Samuel Green; butchers--Joseph Mowery, James Lowery; retired farmers--William Prigg, Sr., Thomas Hasty, Greenberry Farmer; carriage-painter--James Orr; mechanics--James Alspaw, Otis Huston; druggist--Charles Pendleton; also--Rice Keesling, John Hackney Swain, Aaron Swain, George Huston, John Weeks, Jesse Rowlett, Eldred Cooper, George Hoel, Theodore Jester, George W. Hasty, George Swope, Charles McCurdy, Charles Courtney,



W. A. Young, Oliver Lodge, Charles Ayers, Mrs. Elizabeth Tarkleson, Mrs. Bettie Bowman, Mrs. Marthena Udell, Gary Jester and Samuel Keesling.

### POST-MASTERS

A complete list of the post-masters of Mechanicsburg, and the date of appointment, is as follows:— Thomas B. Keesling, July 14, 1849; John C. Goodwin, November 7, 1855; Jacob Meek, May 21, 1856; James Beck, June 11, 1856; Slesman Mecker, October 2, 1862; Isaac Franklin, October 20, 1864; John C. Goodwin, February 2, 1870; Ezra Bulkin, December 8, 1870; John W. McCurdy, June 22, 1871; Wm. A. Greenlee, February 7, 1876; Wm. R. Swain, April 1, 1878; Luther O. Miller, September 25, 1879; C. S. Goodwin, September 16, 1880; J. D. Zirkle, September 3, 1886; J. W. Mills, April 5, 1889; T. A. Goodwin, September 1, 1890; S. S. Hopkins, May 1, 1894; Daniel Rent, March 31, 1898. The "Star Route" was discontinued November 11, 1905, and the mail was then brought to the post-office by Isaac Myer a rural route carrier from Middletown. The post-office was abolished January 15, 1907, since which time the mail is delivered by carrier.

### LODGES

The Mechanicsburg Masonic Lodge was organized in 1868 and chartered May 25, 1869. The





**Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Keesling.**

Mechanicsburg's First Post-Master.





first officers were N. R. Elliott, W. M.; Lewis G. Greenlee, S. W.; J. M. Thurston, J. W. The other charter members were: Jackson Bushong, I. W. Cooper, George Dillinger, John R. Elliott, Greenberry Farmer, Isaac Franklin, George Hasty, Thomas Hasty, John H. Rent, John Swain, Ross Wilkinson, Joseph Weeks, John C. Goodwin.

The I. O. O. F. Lodge was chartered May 19, 1869, with the following members: Squire Olinger, Thomas S. Beck, William McCurdy, Daniel Rent, J. H. Rent, Martin Pring, Job Ginn. The Daughters of Rebecca Lodge was organized June, 1872. The members were: S. C. Olinger, S. F. Olinger, J. H. Rent, Parthena Rent, Martin Pring, Levina Pring, William Perry, M. J. Perry, Job Ginn, Elizabeth Ginn, Jacob Keesling, Maria Keesling, Daniel Rent, Sarah Rent. The present membership is sixty-two.

The Red Men's Lodge was instituted April 9, 1903, with sixty-eight members. They bought the second story of Charles Keesling's store in 1905. A Pocahontas Lodge was organized January 16, 1906.

### THESPIAN SOCIETY

The Thespian Society was formed among the members of the Order of Good Templars in 1867. The object was to give entertainments to pay for the Templars' Hall which was the old one-story school-house. The members were J. M. Thurston, W. H. Keesling, L. P. Mitchell, A. S. Huston,



Thomas Beck, John Hasty, George Rent, Moses Rent, Ida F. Elliott, Mary L. Beck, Sarah C. Perry. Dr. J. M. Thurston, now of Richmond, Indiana, painted the stage scenery and arranged a stage which, though diminutive, closely resembled that of a "real theater." This company of inexperienced young people played "Richard III" most creditably with Dr. Thurston in the title role. They also played a comedy, "The Persecuted Dutchman." The plays surpassed anything before attempted by local talent, but in a few days a shadow was cast over their triumph by the death of John Hasty, one of their number.

### QUI VIVE CLUB

The Qui Vive Club, a progressive, wide-awake woman's club, was organized December 12, 1902, with the following charter members: Mrs. Laura Cooper, Mrs. Josie Hardesty, Miss Emily Weeks, Mrs. Nan Janett Keesling, Miss Blanche Goodwin, Miss Elizabeth Weeks, Mrs. Daisy Misener, Miss Mary Quigley, Mrs. Orie Strough, Mrs. Lucy Goodwin. Other members of the club are the Misses Grace and Josephine Rent, Gertrude Seaford, Winifred VanWinkle, Vienne Prigg, India Cooper, Virgil VanWinkle, Mrs. Edna Lewis. The club, in addition to the work of self-improvement, has taken hold of the village improvement idea and has already secured fire protection for the town.





Qui Vive Club.



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*In Memoriam*

ELIZABETH WEEKS,

August, 1904.

LUCY GOODWIN,

May, 1907.

"Beneath the low green tent  
Whose curtain never outward swings."

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**THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

There was a strong anti-slavery sentiment in Mechanicsburg. The home of John Swain, Sr., north of town was one of the "Underground Railroad Stations." Many a negro was brought here from Greensboro by Daniel Saint who always came in the night, rapped at the door, stepped aside where he could not be seen when the door was opened, and with a laconic "Here's your goods," sped away in the darkness. Mr. Swain, who was a staunch anti-slavery Quaker, took the fugitive slave in, cared for him and, usually on the following night, sent him in charge of one of his own sons to the next Station. John Swain, Jr., now of Middletown, took a number of these slaves to the "Back Creek" neighborhood near Fairmount where there was another Station. Later, Lewis Swain's home served as a Station. Mrs. Boulah A. Swain who helped care for these slaves had, when a young girl, listened to the inspiring words of the noted anti-sla-





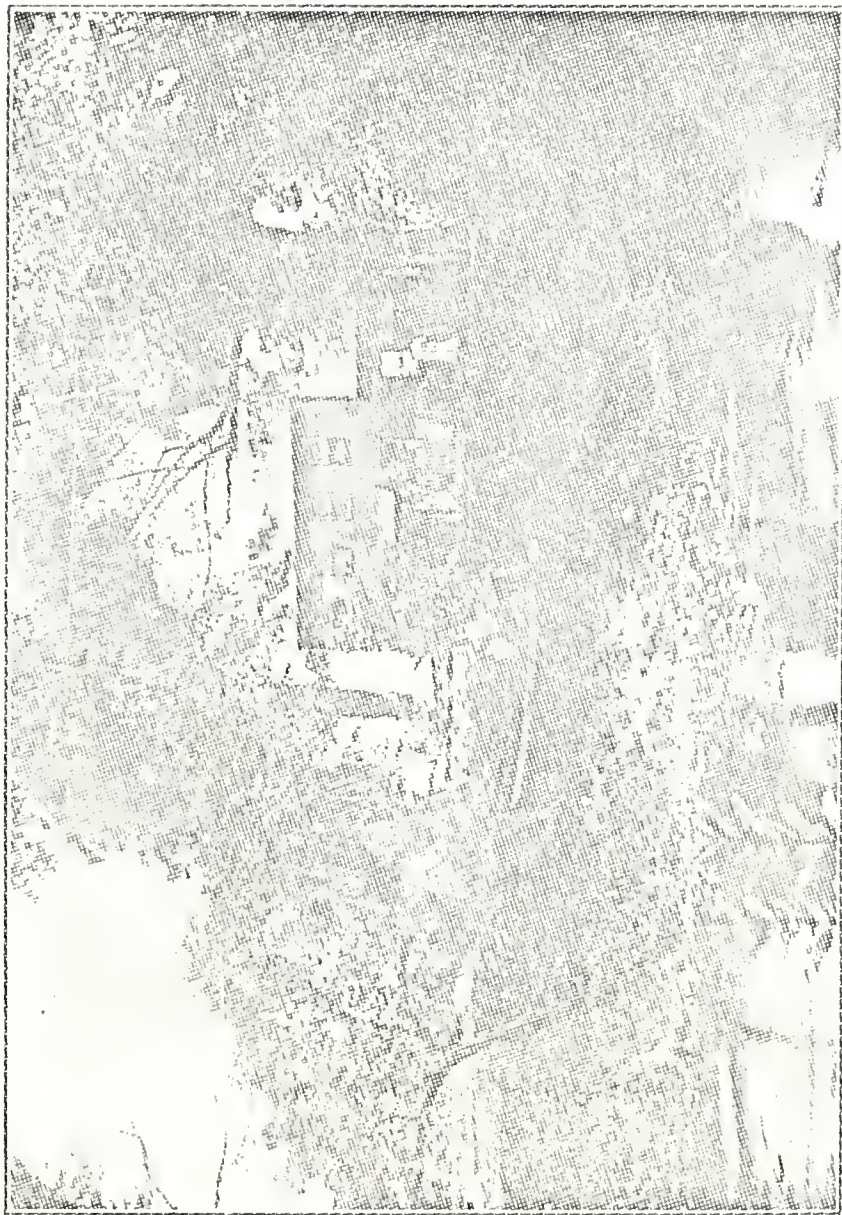
very speakers. She attended the dedication of the famous "Pennsylvania Hall" where she saw Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Burleigh, the Grimke Sisters, Abby Kelly and John G. Whittier. She heard Lucretia Mott plead for the slave from the pulpit and from the platform. Mrs. Swain, now eighty-eight years old, has lived to see the slave for whom she labored enjoy more than forty years of freedom.

### THE CIVIL WAR

When the call for men to defend the Union came, Mechanicsburg answered generously. Company E. of the 8th Infantry was mustered into service September 5, 1861, and took the following men:--William Perry, Daniel Rent, Samuel Mitchell, George Tarkleson, James W. Alexander, William T. Beck, John K. Swain, Gary Jester, Salathiel Bowers. They took part in the campaign against Vicksburg and were there during the forty-seven days between the investment and surrender of the city. William T. Beck was killed May 23, 1863. Daniel Rent was wounded at Jackson, Mississippi. John K. Swain reached home only to die August 22, 1863.

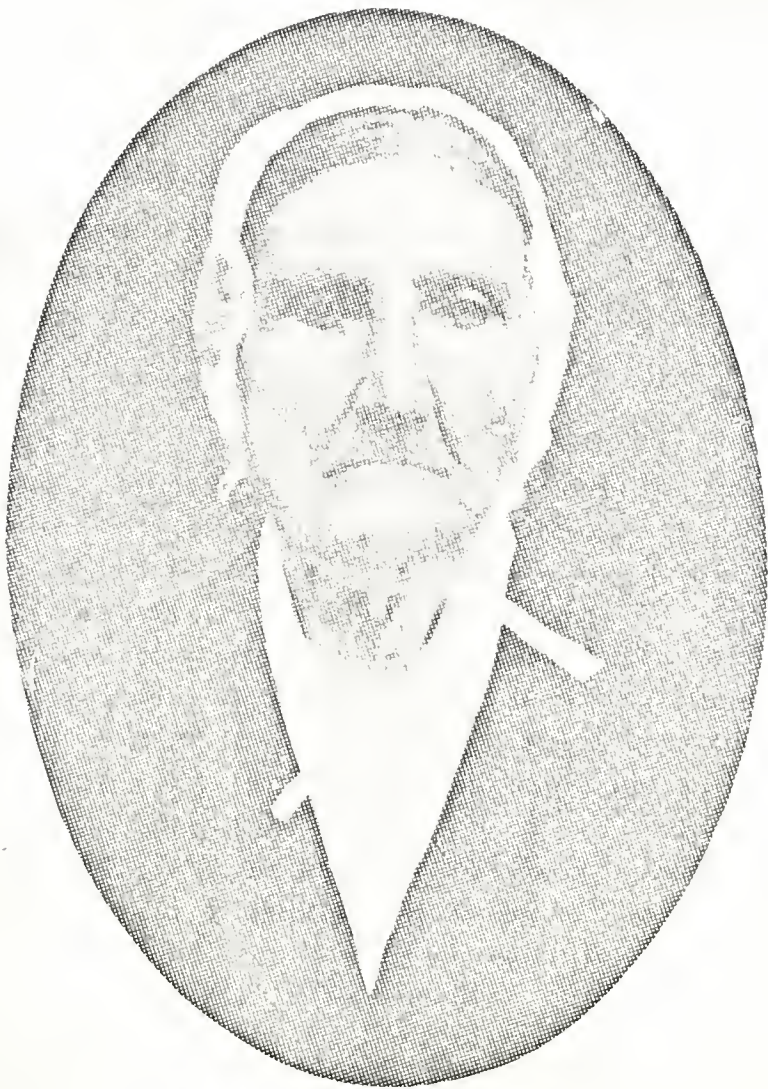
Company F. of the 57th Infantry was recruited in October and November, 1861. The following men entered service: John H. Rent, Thomas Ginn, Joseph Huston, Josephus V. Elliott, James J. Black, Moses Bowers, and Isaac Nicodemus. Henry Als-





Residence of John Swain, Sr. (Underground R. R. Station.)





**Mrs. Anne Swain. 1789-1875.**  
( Wife of John Swain, Sr. )





paw served in Company E., 9th Indiana Cavalry.

In Company H. of the 69th Infantry, were Amos Kisling, John R. Elliott, Thomas W. Gronendyke, James Edward McCormack, William McCurdy, Hugh Murphy, Jonathan Murphy, Isaac Keesling, William H. Huston, John Wesley Miller, Robert V. Price, William B. Henshaw, Nicholas Ginn, William Wiseheart, W. R. Alexander and Jacob Alspaw. This Company went into quarters at Camp Wayne Richmond, Indiana, and was mustered into the service of the United States August 19, 1862. At this time the Confederates under General Bragg were invading Kentucky. One division under General Kirby Smith was sweeping on toward Cincinnati. All the regiments then organizing in Indiana and Ohio were hurried forward. Among others went the 69th Regiment only a few days in camp and without discipline and drill. On the 20th of August, they left Camp Wayne and ten days later took part in the battle near Richmond, Kentucky. The brave but undisciplined Federals were no match for Smith's drilled men, and the battle resulted in the defeat of the Union troops. Two members of Company H., Robert Price and William B. Henshaw, were killed, seventeen were wounded and fifty were captured. The late John R. Elliott, first sergeant, was wounded and lay unattended on the battle field for nineteen hours. The prisoners were soon released on parole and returned home. The patriotic women of Mechanicsburg gave a great dinner to the





returned heroes. A large wagon shop standing on or near the site of Dr. Misener's office, after being cleared and decorated with the national colors, served as a banquet hall. After these paroled men were exchanged they, in November, went to Memphis, Tennessee. They took part in the assault on Chickasaw Bluffs, December 29, and helped in the capture of Arkansas Post, January 11, 1863. On returning the 69th Regiment encamped at Young's Point, Louisiana. This was a low marshy place and much sickness followed. Among the many who died here were William H. Huston, February 20, 1863, and Isaac B. Keesling March 18, 1863. At Milliken's Bend, La., another marshy encampment, William Wesley Miller died May 9, 1863, and James Edward McCormack died February 18, 1863.

John R. Elliott was discharged March, 1863. William McCurdy January, 1865. Amos Kising April, 1863. William Wisheart was mustered out May, 1865. On the 5th of July, 1865, the 69th Regiment was mustered out.

When Governor Morton called for men at the time of Morgan's raid the following men went out from our town and vicinity: Dr. George Hasty, first lieutenant; W. M. Rix, second lieutenant; Slesman Meeker, John W. Keesling, John Van Buskirk, Thomas Beck, Samuel Bowers, Job Ginn, T. W. Gronendyke, Eli Keesling, C. F. Keesling, C. F. B. Keesling, O. H. Modlin, W. H. Prigg, William Swain, Henry Swain, Martin Wise-



heart, Reuben Wiseheart, and James Huston.

Under the call for "One Hundred Days Troops," L. P. Mitchell and George D. Rent enlisted in the 139th Regiment.

## INCIDENTS

### Pioneer Experiences

Before Mechanicsburg had an existence there was a little store about one-half mile west of the present site of the town. Jonathan Lewis remembers that one of his father's neighbors was imprisoned on account of a debt at this store, which was called the Raper Store. The law at that time permitted imprisonment for debt. John Swain, Jr., says the first trading he ever did was at Raper's store when he exchanged ginseng roots for a pocket-knife.

When Daniel Keesling was examining a tract of land with a view of entering it, he saw a stranger looking over the same tract and apparently hunting for a spring. Mr. Keesling knew he must act quickly, or lose the land. His brother, Jacob, immediately saddled a horse and hurried to Indianapolis. He secured the land and as he was leaving the office met the stranger ascending the steps. After building his cabin, Daniel Keesling was unexpectedly called away one evening and through a misunderstanding Mrs. Keesling was left alone all night with two small children. There was only a blanket hanging in the doorway and Mr. Keesling had burned a brush pile each night to frighten away



the wild animals that lurked in the wood. On the night in question Mrs. Keesling ("Aunt Katie-Dan'l") climbed a ladder with her children to some boards which had been laid overhead. She spent the night in terror since there was no fire to frighten away the bears and wolves and no door to bar them out. Mrs. Mary Luthultz, now the oldest living member of the Keesling family in this neighborhood, was one of these children.

### **A Crusade**

It was probably in the summer of 1858 that a man named Snideman, who lived in a log house on the site of John Albright's home, bought a barrel of whiskey and began to retail it. The women soon decided that it must be stopped. One evening a little band of determined women gathered together and quietly started to the house of the offender. The man, however, had received warning and they found the doors fastened. A missing window pane served as a port-hole through which the defender brandished a butcher-knife and poured forth a volley of profanity. They demanded the whiskey, and he denied having it. Finding he could not drive them away by threats, he slipped out the back door, had his wife fasten it behind him, and came around to put the crusaders out by main force. In an unguarded moment he tripped and fell to the ground. It is hinted that his fair visitors, taking advantage of his blind rage, deliberately planned his fall. Some of



their number held Snideman securely while others proceeded to mete out justice. The group of men standing outside the fence waiting to help their wives, if necessary, smiled encouragingly to them when their victim stopped threatening and began to yell "Murder!" One lady, in speaking of this incident, smiled reminiscently as she said, "Good land! I wonder we didn't leave him entirely bald." Snideman was not now in a position to ask liberal terms and agreed to give up the whiskey if allowed to retain a certain amount for his own use. The women allowed him to do this, but watched to see that he took no more than the specified amount. The men then carried the barrel up town and finding the whiskey would not burn poured it upon the ground. It is said that a thirsty hog gulped some of it down and then lay in a stupor for several hours. The good citizens felt sorry for the hog, but thought it not so bad for a hog to be in the gutter as it would be for their sons to be there. Nathan Murphy, a Justice of the Peace, in order to prevent an indictment threatened by Snideman, hastily summoned the women to appear before him and fined them ONE CENT each. One of the guards, also, was fined twenty-five cents for administering a kick. The women who took part in this little crusade were Mesdames Frederick Rent, John Showers, William Alexander, James Alexander, William Wood, James Small, Ezra Swain, Stowe, James Wood, Job Ginn. Mrs. James Alexander is now Mrs. W. H. Eiler, and lives at Warsaw,





Indiana. Two of the number, Mrs. William Wood and Mrs. Job Ginn, are still living in Mechanicsburg and furnish the information here given. The others have been laid to rest, but the influence of that day's work has ever since kept the town free from saloons.

### **Two Fires**

On the night of December 12, 1901, a fire originated in the Post-Office and when discovered was under such headway that neither the building nor contents could be saved. Dr. Elizabeth Weeks' office stood only a few feet to the west and was soon in flames. J. W. Goodwin's furniture store, on the east, was blazing in a few minutes and from this building the flames leaped to W. H. Keesling's grocery store, thence to the adjacent building in which he kept a stock of hardware. Next in the path of the fire was Charles F. Keesling's two-story workshop. This was soon destroyed and it was only by the most heroic work that the fire was stopped here. The building in which the Post-Office was located was the first business house built in the town, and had been moved from the northeast corner to West Street. Of the six buildings burned two have been replaced by new ones. J. W. Goodwin built a furniture store in 1902 and Charles F. Keesling erected a two-story business building in 1904.

Again on the night of January 29, 1904, a fire originated in Walter M. Lowery's house. Mr. Lowery barely escaped with his life. Jacob Zirkle's



home, just across the alley, was also soon in ashes. Mr. Zirkle immediately rebuilt.

### Recollections

W. H. Keesling remembers buying candy in John Kelley's store on West Street but does not remember whether it was a dry goods, drug or grocery store. He remembers the candy jar only.

John Goodwin, growing reminiscent, told how Luther Miller, W. A., and "Judge" Greenlee played the fife and drums of evenings during the Hayes campaign. "They played to beat the band. It was while Henry Lennard was teaching school here."

There are many who remember the delightful days when the school-children carried water from "Aunt Betsey's Spring." We remember the steep banks, the crooked tree, the cluster of locusts along the way, and the tiny stream of clear water that ran from the spring down the hill-side. Mrs. W. A. Greenlee remembers that we used to spill the water as we neared the school house so that we must return for more. The long hill with the creek at its foot, the blue flags that grew by the roadside, and the calamus patch, too, were never-failing sources of pleasure. You remember there was standing on the west bank of the creek an oak that we expected to topple over because the earth was crumbling away from its roots. The old monarch is still defying the storms. Like a sentinel it stands watching over the "City of the Dead" where so many of our school-mates lie at rest.



## THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF YESTERDAY

Among the successful and useful men and women whose childhood days were spent in Mechanicsburg or on the adjacent farms, may be mentioned: Benjamin Bonham, who served as Secretary of State of Oregon; L. P. Mitchell who, since 1898, has been Deputy Comptroller of the U. S. Treasury; Mrs. M. E. S. Charles, a newspaper and magazine writer, Spiceland; the late E. L. Elliott, who was cashier of the Middletown bank, and had served two terms in the state legislature; George L. Swain, an attorney of Middletown; Lurtin R. Ginn who, since 1884, has held a position in the Treasury Department at Washington; Benjamin F. Keesling, proprietor of the Logansport Journal; Cornelious B. Keesling, furniture dealer, Tacoma, Wash.; Dr. John Fatic, Judge C. M. Greenlee, of the Superior Court, Anderson; John U. Hinshaw, teacher and farmer, Monticello; Luther Swain, contractor and builder, Otis Keesling, blacksmith, Noblesville; Frank Prigg, an attorney of Hutchinson, Kansas; Moses Rent, miller, Pendleton; Fremont White, carpenter, Oakland, California; Cassius White, R. R. clerk, Morton White, bank teller, Topeka, Kansas; Wilson Showalter, furniture dealer and undertaker, O. P. Greenlee, merchant, W. A. Greenlee, harness dealer, Calvin Swain, salesman, Samuel Liebhardt, photographer, Zell Swain, attorney, William and John Liebhardt, proprietors of woolen mills, Willis Wiseheart, stock dealer, Owen Swain, superintendent of electric light plant, Earnest Swain, car-



penter, Peter Keesling, lumber dealer, James H. Keesling, contractor and builder, Ward Cooper, stock buyer, Claire Greenlee, harness maker, Jacob Sinnett, farming, Eva Myer, stenographer,—Middletown; Myrtle Newkirk, professional nurse, William McCurdy Jr., mechanic, William Ayers and Charles VanWinkle, grocers, Charles Rent, carpenter, Grover Fatic, teacher, W. M. Swain, restaurateur, Glenn Greenlee, shoemaker—Anderson; Allie Brown, proprietor of a printing establishment, Portland, Oregon; Victor M. Cooper, stock dealer, Pendleton; Annie Keesling-Williams, formerly cashier at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, now a teacher in the Oakwood Training School, Huntsville, Alabama; Genevieve Moore, who recently graduated from a training school for nurses, Chicago, Illinois; Glenn Hinshaw, an art student in Paris; Ray and Lloyd Keesling who are in business in New York City; Arla Murphy, traveling salesman, Gurdine Murphy, insurance business, Clifford Newkirk, florist, Victor A. Swain, engineer at the terminal station, Carl M. and Joseph H. Swain, plumbers, Harry Swain, plasterer, Jack Keesling, painter—Indianapolis; Williard VanWinkle chief clerk in the car depot of the Santa Fe R. R. at Winslow, Arizona; Rolla Myer, teacher, Eugene, Oregon; Charles L. Miller, mechanical engineer at Columbus, Ohio; Will E. Miller, dentist, Howard Keesling, restaurateur, John Newkirk, glass trade—Shirley; Edgar and Earl Ellison, engaged in construction work, Isaac Keesling, fruit grower, California; Allen Fatic, grain





dealer, Markleville; Lestie and Laurel Ellison, farming in southern Indiana; Porter Cooper, bank clerk, Muncie; Ray Cooper, clerk, Illinois; Augustus Greenlee, blacksmith, Sulphur Springs; John Harrell, contractor and carpenter, Winchester; David Keesling carpenter, Cadiz; Webster Keesling, farming near Shirley; Samuel and Eddie Keesling, farming, Mechanicsburg; the late Charles Hasty who was a shoemaker at Marion; Joseph Swain, superintendent of Boone Park, Louisville, Kentucky; Benjamin Keesling farming, Minnesota; Henry Swain, farming, Ingalls; Nelson Wiseheart, Clinton Sinnett, Clinton, Vinton and Joseph Farmer, Lee Prigg, Ed. Cooper, John Cooper, farming—Mechanicsburg; Charles Prigg, groceryman, Berry Prigg, dairyman,—Muncie; Jacob Swartz, contractor and builder, Benton Swain with the I. U. Traction Company, On ar VanWinkle and Albert Swartz, farming,—Anderson; William Swartz, machinist, Detroit; Charles Alspaw, blacksmith, West Alexandria, Ohio; Archie, Russell, and Joseph Keesling, carpenters, Oakland, California; Stephen Keesling, farming, Boone County; Benjamin Franklin, machinist, Mechanicsburg; Frank Newkirk, engineer for cold storage plant, Sioux City, Iowa; Charles Newkirk, stereotyper, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Lowell Prigg, machinist Seattle, Washington; Guy Keesling, mechanic, Kirby Prigg, machinist, Grace Prigg teacher,—New Castle.

Many of our girls are presiding over homes and are thus doing an important part of the world's



work. Among this number are Bettie Miller-Brookshire, Hulda Swain-Anderson, Lena Rent-Laboyteau, Kennard; Ida Elliott-Thurston, Libbie Keesling-Eaton, Richmond; Mary Beck-Ellis, Florence Swain-Conner, Kokomo; Cordelia Swain-Hasty, Marion; Annie Swain-Flanigan, Fairmount; Sarah Alspaw-Trout, Ethel Ellison-Fadely, Chloe Elliott-Cummins, Mabel Keesling-Yost, Sulphur Springs; Sarah Miller, Elzena White-VanWinkle, Lottie Keesling-Manzy, Minnie VanWinkle-Cooper, Annie VanWinkle-Lewis, Mechanicsburg; Mary White, Topeka, Kansas; Sarah Swain-Tackleson, Charity Wiseheart-Davis, the late Elizabeth Wiseheart-Franklin, Lorinda Wiseheart-McWilliams, Mary Upp-Keesling, Jennie Keesling-Fatic, Sarah Swain-Fatic, Mattie Fatic-Keesling, Emma Swain-Hendricks, Ruth Hinshaw-Cooper, Lydia Keesling-Weaver, Emily Greenlee-Elliott, Neva Swain-Pushong, Bertha Greenlee-Keesling, Jessie VanWinkle-Cummins--Middletown; Emma Swain, Noblesville; Mary A. Hasty-Personett, Minnesota; Rosa Alspaw-Mee, Canton, Ohio; Neva Moore-Kineman, Goodland; Nora Sinnett-Hinshaw, Greensboro; Ada Sinnett-Jester, Fortville; Jennie Murphy-Bragden, Lawton, Oklahoma; Sarah Rent-Wetz, Jennie Swain-Charles, Helen Prigg-Ginn, Maggie Keesling, Annie Swain-Rodecap, Zoa Myer-Brown, Belle Julian-Barth, Edna McCormack-Pauley, Louise Ginn-Bishop.--Indianapolis; Mary McCurdy-Lloyd, Laura Rent-Cunningham, Libbie Greenlee-Manzy, Markleville; Alice Sinnett-Gilmore, Fannie Keesling-Cissell,



Zannie Swain-Harold, Lottie Prigg-Jester, Eva Myer-Gilmore, Bertha Ritchie-Nipp, the late Anna Swartz-Graham, Ida Gray-Fatic, Jennie Newkirk-Dennis, --Anderson; Josie Cooper-Toppin, Portland; Ruby Cooper-Martin, Hazel Cooper-Drew, Geneva; Emma Greenlee-Osborne, Flora Greenlee-Hileman, Nettie Greenlee-Abbott, Ida Greenlee-Garrigus, Effie Henshaw-Carter, Pearl Keesling-Seward, Mary Alspaw-Hasty, --Elwood; Kate Prigg-Frampton, Mollie Rent-Brown, Pendleton; Rena Gipe-Prigg, Ella Prigg-Straddling, Muncie; May Prigg-Hodges, Martinsville; Emma Harrell-Ryan, Fayetteville; Maud Keesling-Young, Clyde Keesling-Judd, Shirley; Lora McCurdy-Rodeca, McKeesport, Pa.; Maggie Greenlee-Muterspaugh, Frankton; Dora Newkirk, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Eva Keesling-Ross, Riverside, California; Dottie Pendleton-Keesling, New York City; Ollie Newkirk-Newman, Streator, Illinois; Sarah Adamson-Thompson, Montrew Day-Sanders, Honey Creek.

### OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Homer Wood, Grace and Josephine Rent, Velma Roller, Leon Brown, who is a student at the State University; Jessie Brown, Lawrence Goodwin, who is studying at LaFayette; Blanche Goodwin, a student at the College of Musical Art, Indianapolis; India Cooper, Earl Keesling, Ruth Albright, Truman, Charles and Virgie Hendricks, Hazel Reed, Olive Lewis, Gladys Sinnett, Clarence Coon, Norman and Thomas Werfield, Inla Cooper, Leo Pendleton,



George Pendleton, who is a student at Purdue University; Lawrence, Russell and Vienne Prigg, Arthur VanWinkle, who is preparing to enter medical college; Winifred and Virgil VanWinkle, Amy Lewis, Virgie and Georgia Mauzy, Linnie and Ethel Keesling, Bessie and Artemus Reed, Oliver Moore, Grace, Dot and Opal Zirkle, Mary Dasher, Mary Fatic, Rosa and Charles Adams, Calvin Graham.

We also claim the following young people from Pleasant Hill who attend church and Sunday-school here: Ada and Raymond Lewis, Osa and Hassel Bushong, Edward, Stanton, Clio, Grace, Gladys and Flossie Lewis and Hershel Whistler.

Wherever Mechanicsburg's sons and daughters may roam they still have visions of a village—

"Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:  
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm,  
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topped the neighboring  
hill!"





## **Illustrations**

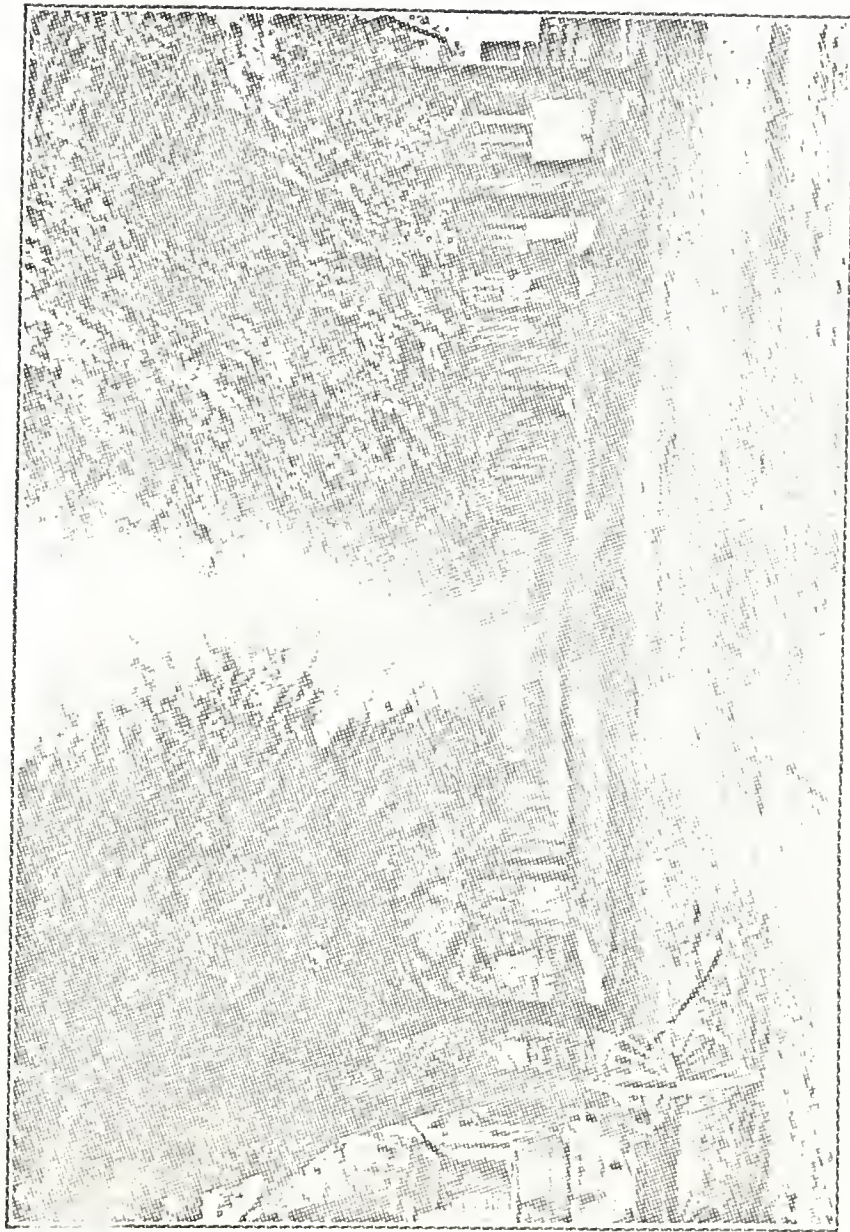
INCLUDING PORTRAITS, RESIDENCES  
AND PLACES OF INTEREST ABOUT  
MECHANICSBURG





THE OLD KATHARIN WOLFE 1811.

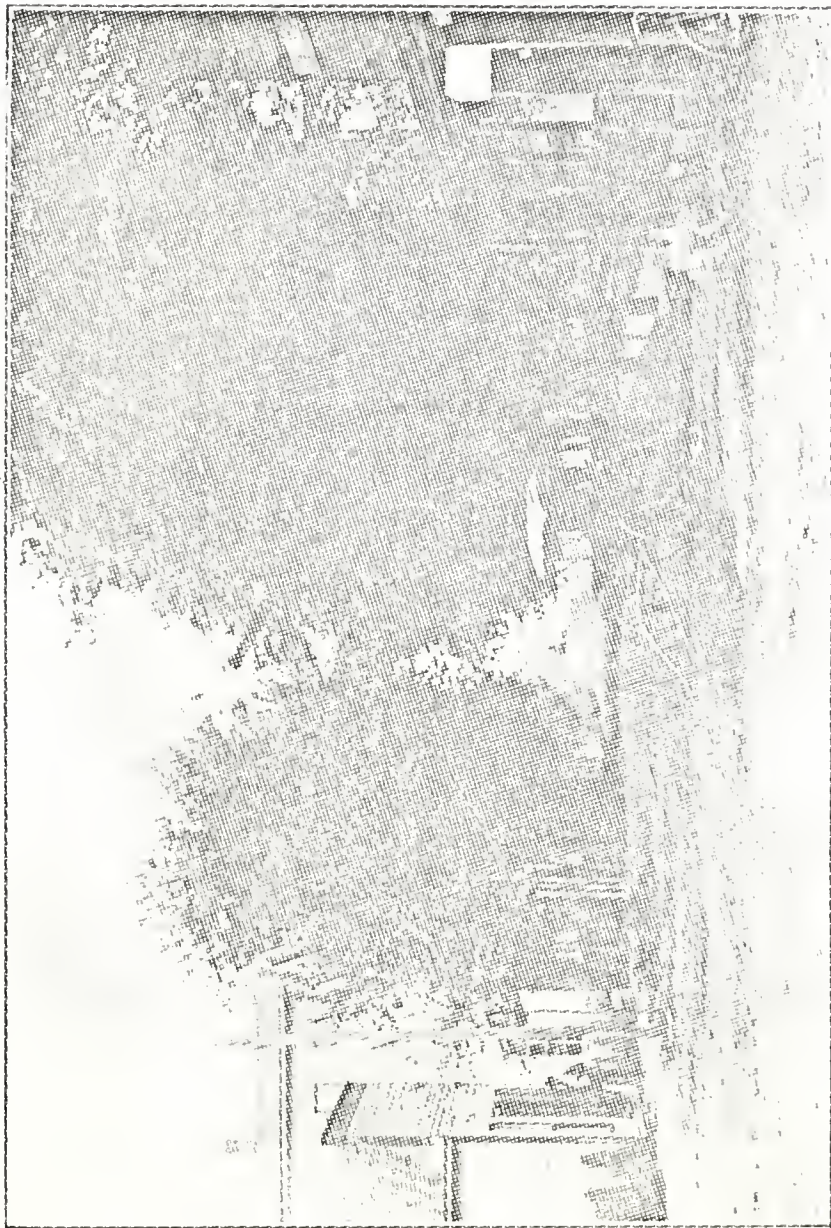




View on North Street.



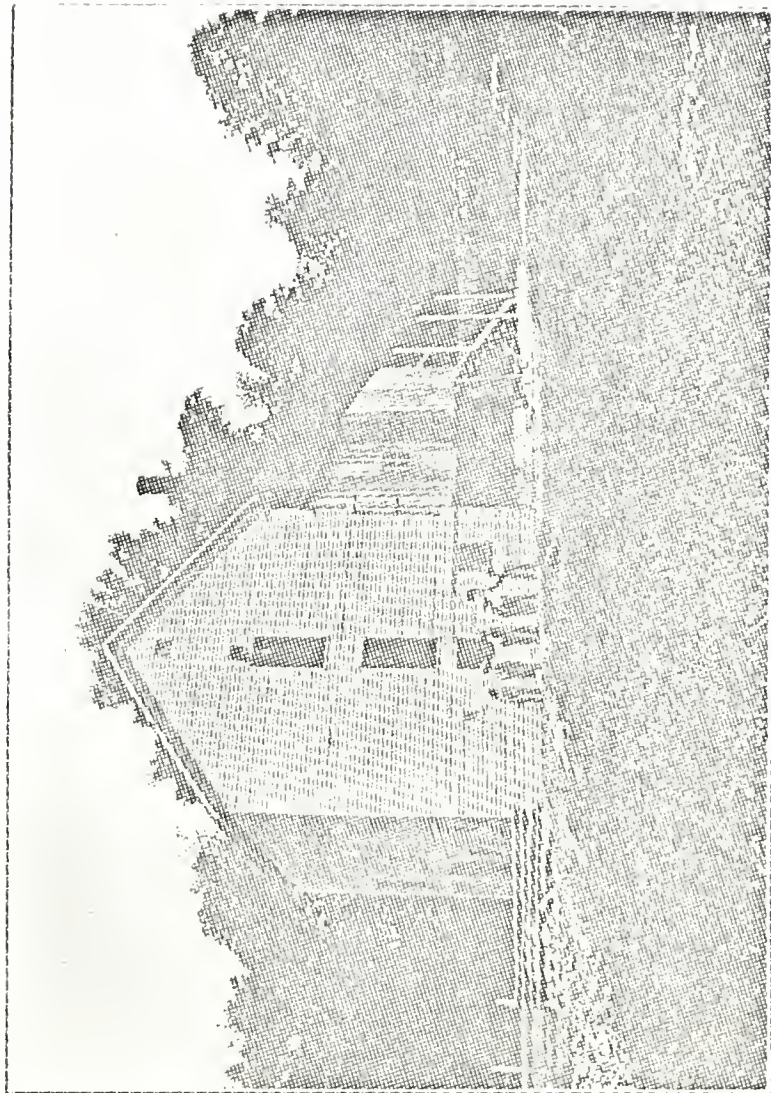




View on South Street.

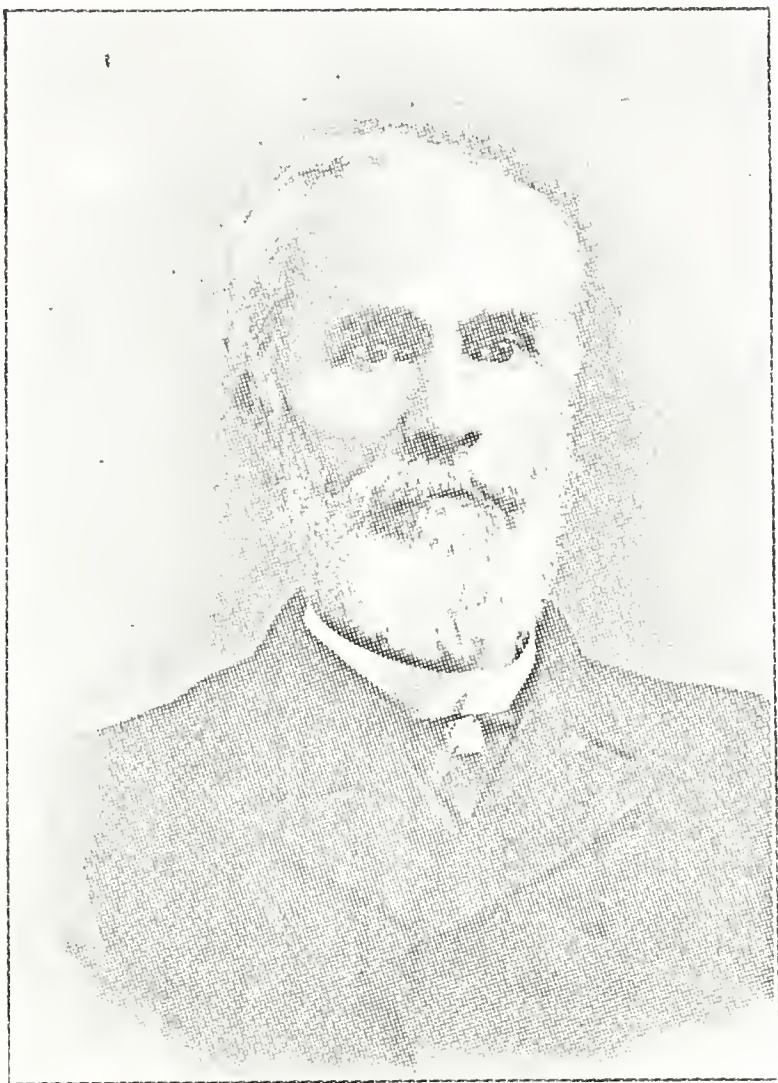






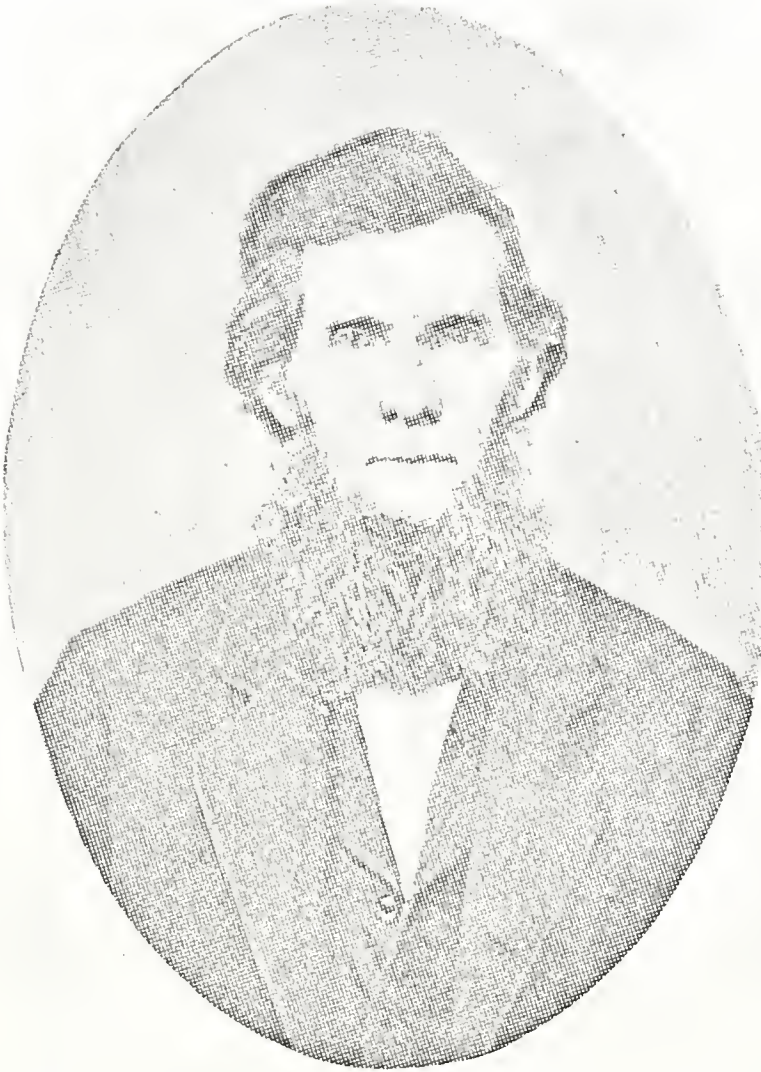
The Old Swain Mill.





**N. R. Elliott. 1827-1905.**

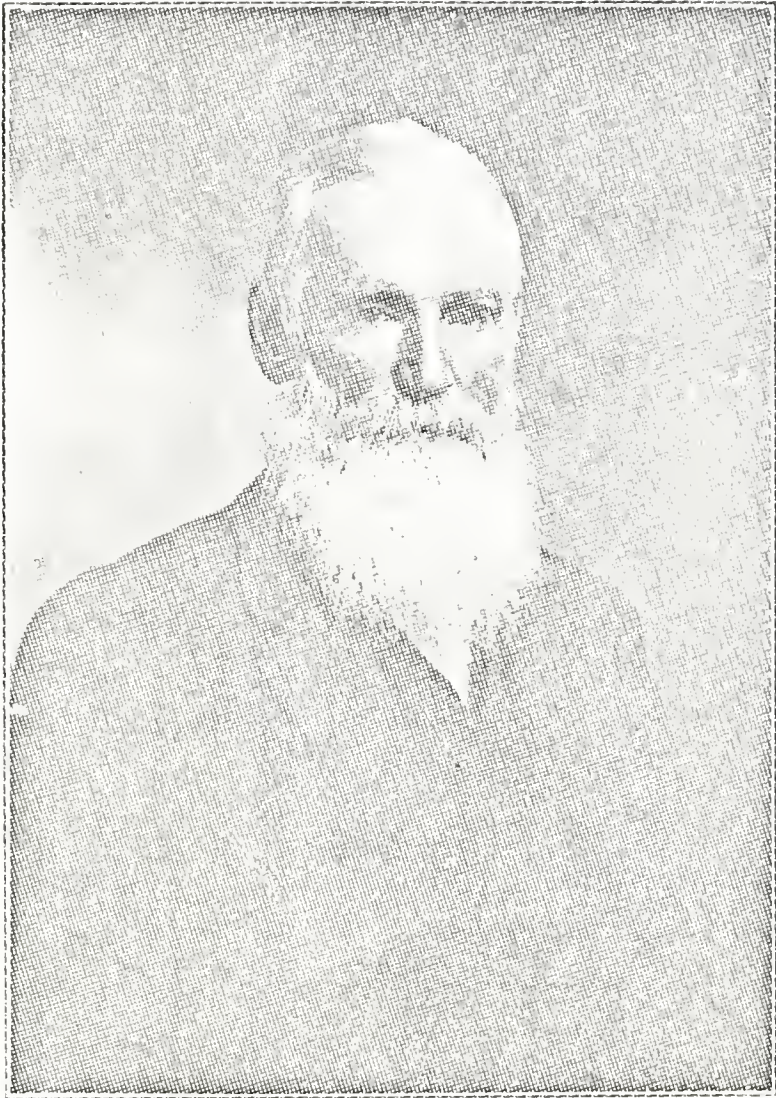




Enos Adamson. 1822-1875.



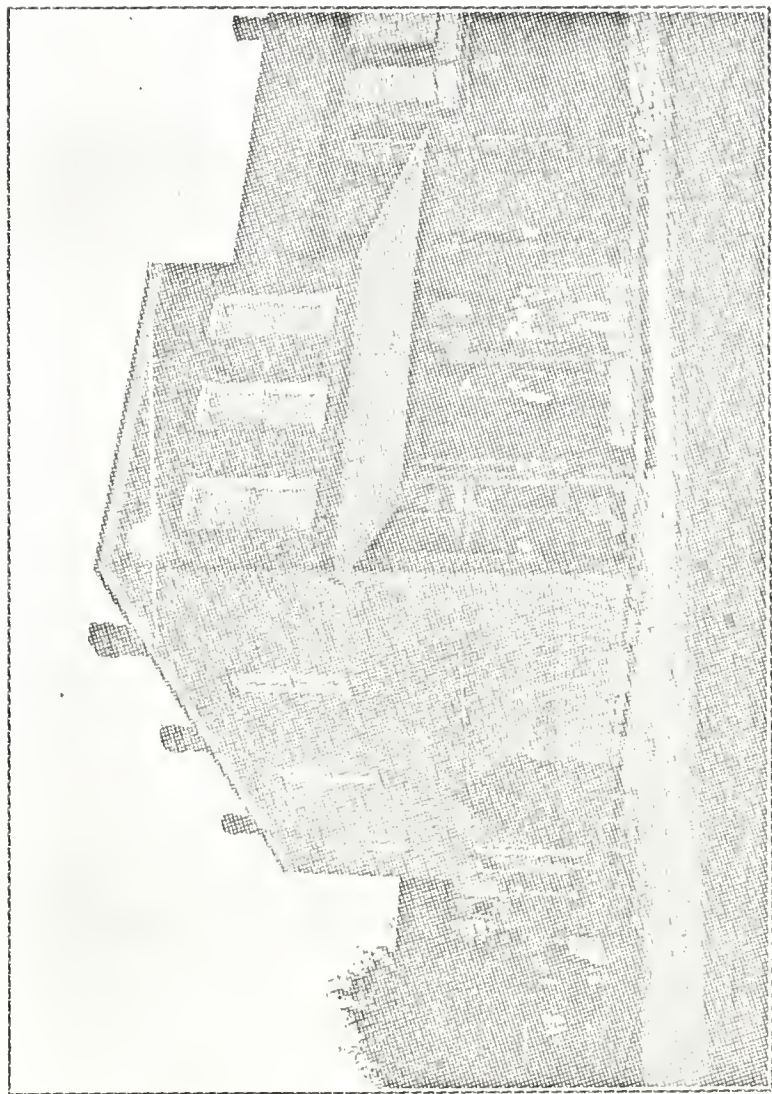




Joseph Weeks, M. D.

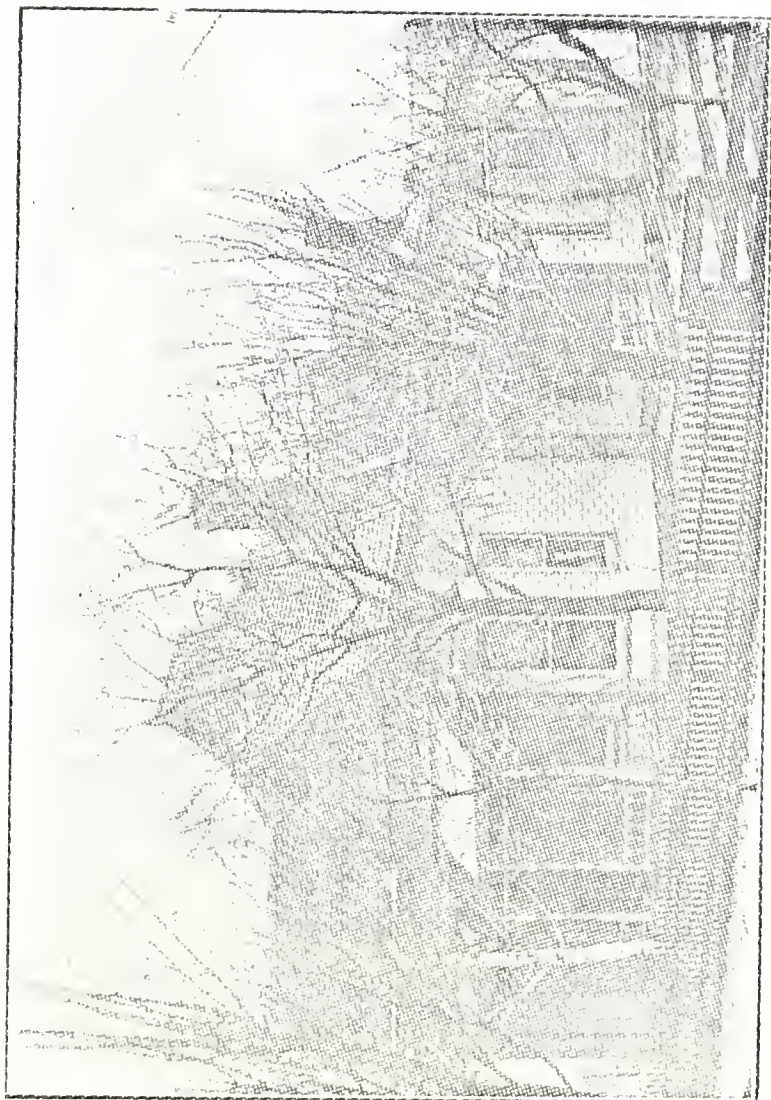






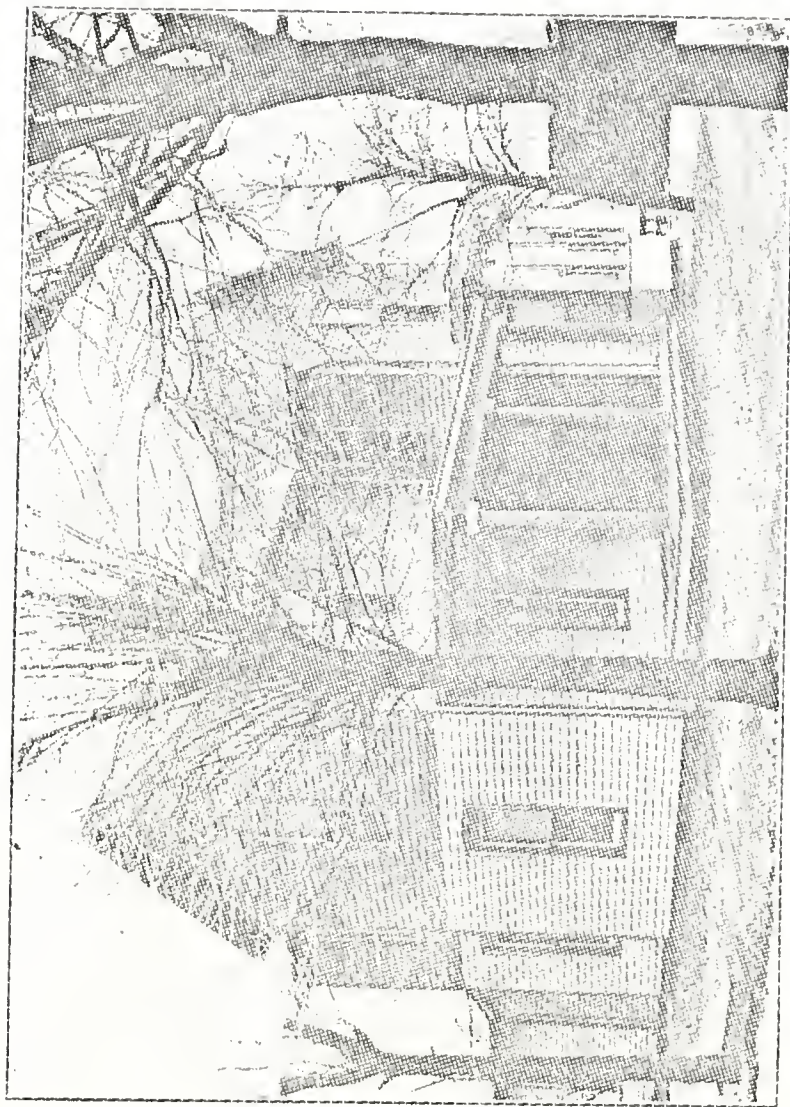
J. W. Goodwin's Dry Goods Store.





Residence of Frank W. Strough.

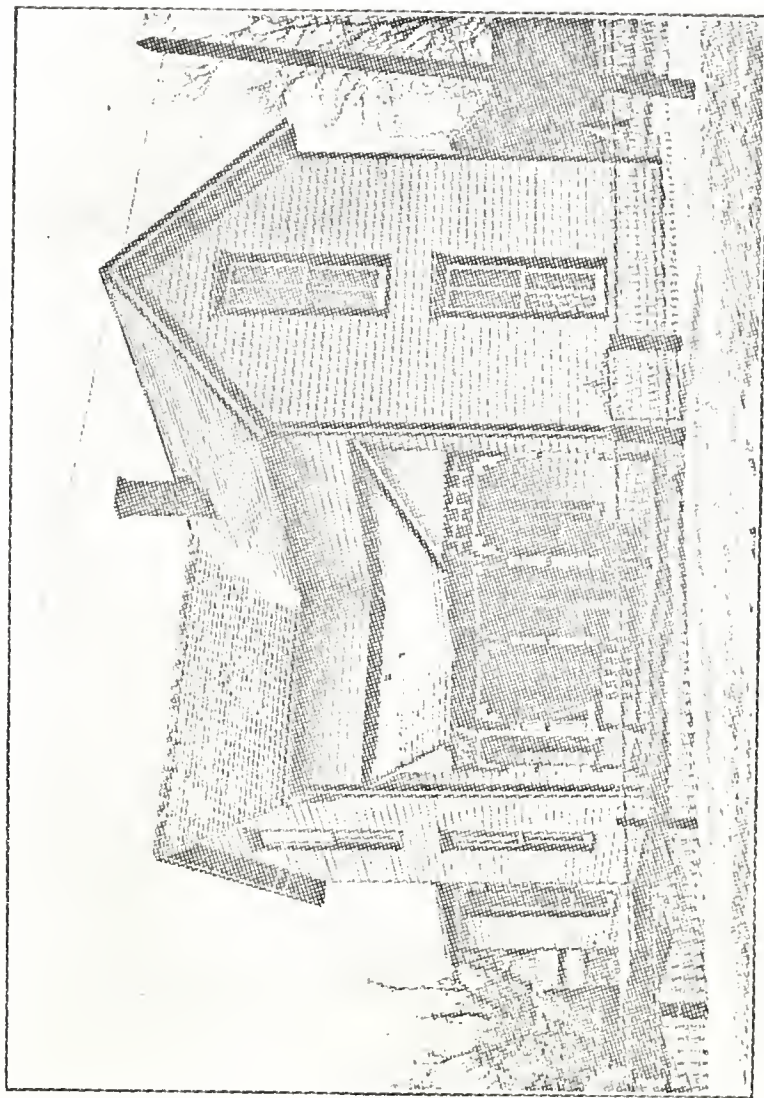




Residence of William H. Keesling.



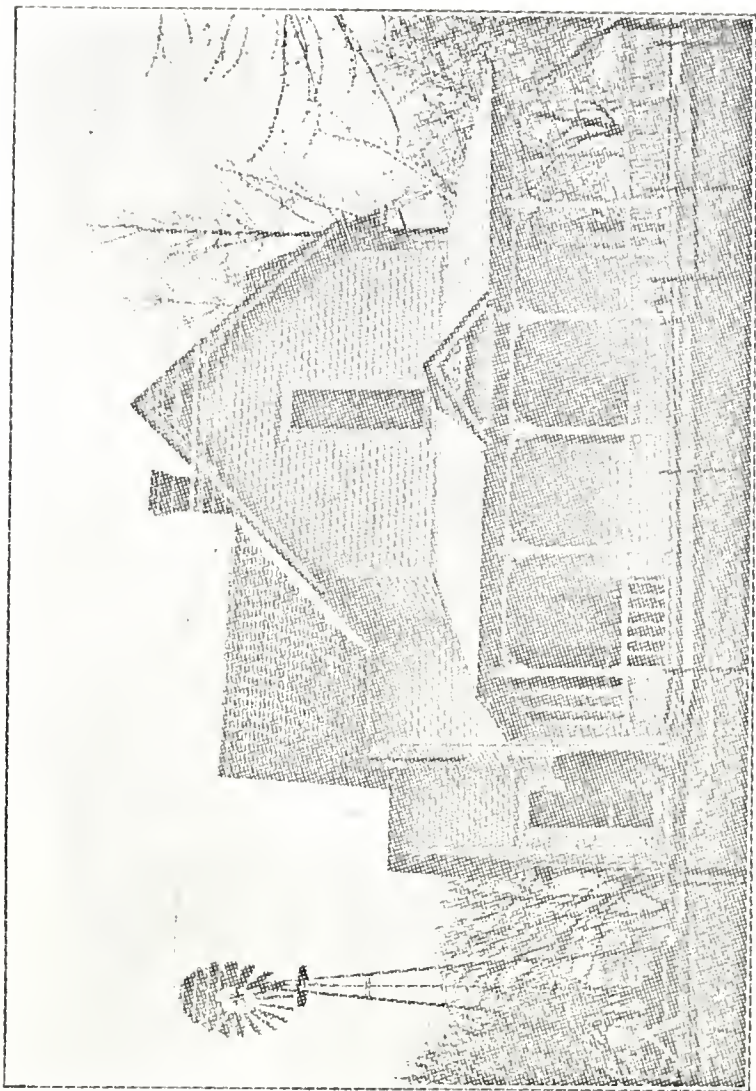




Residence of Daniel Rent.

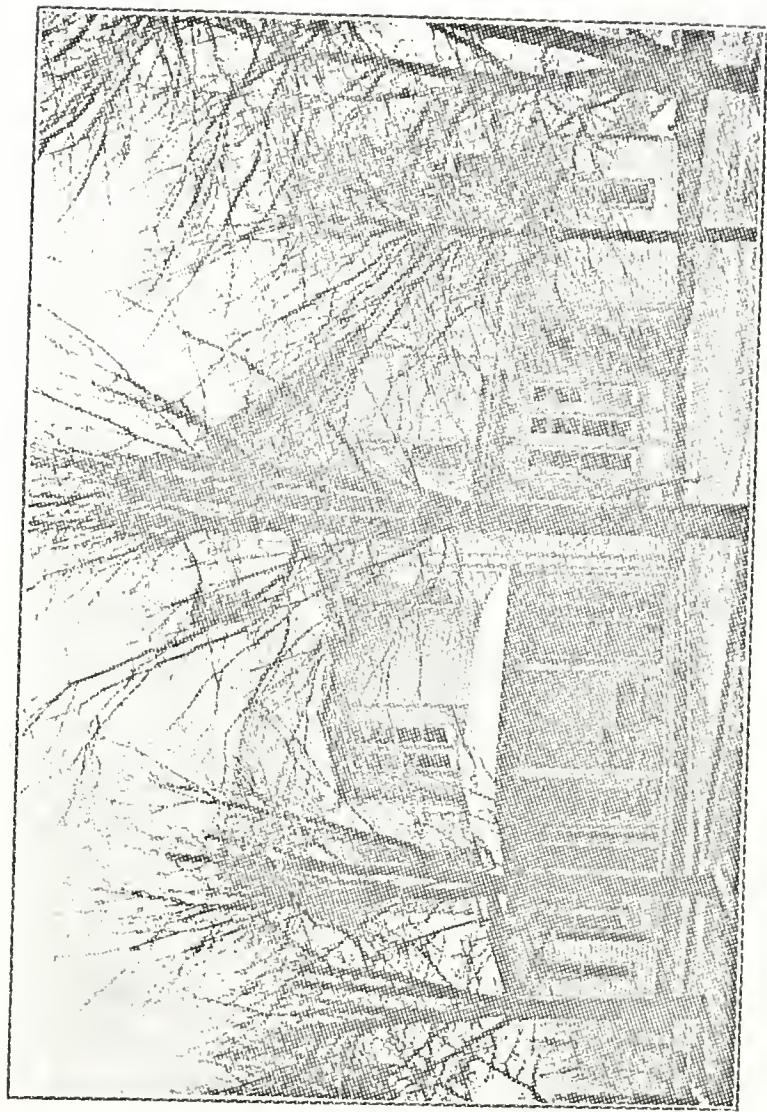






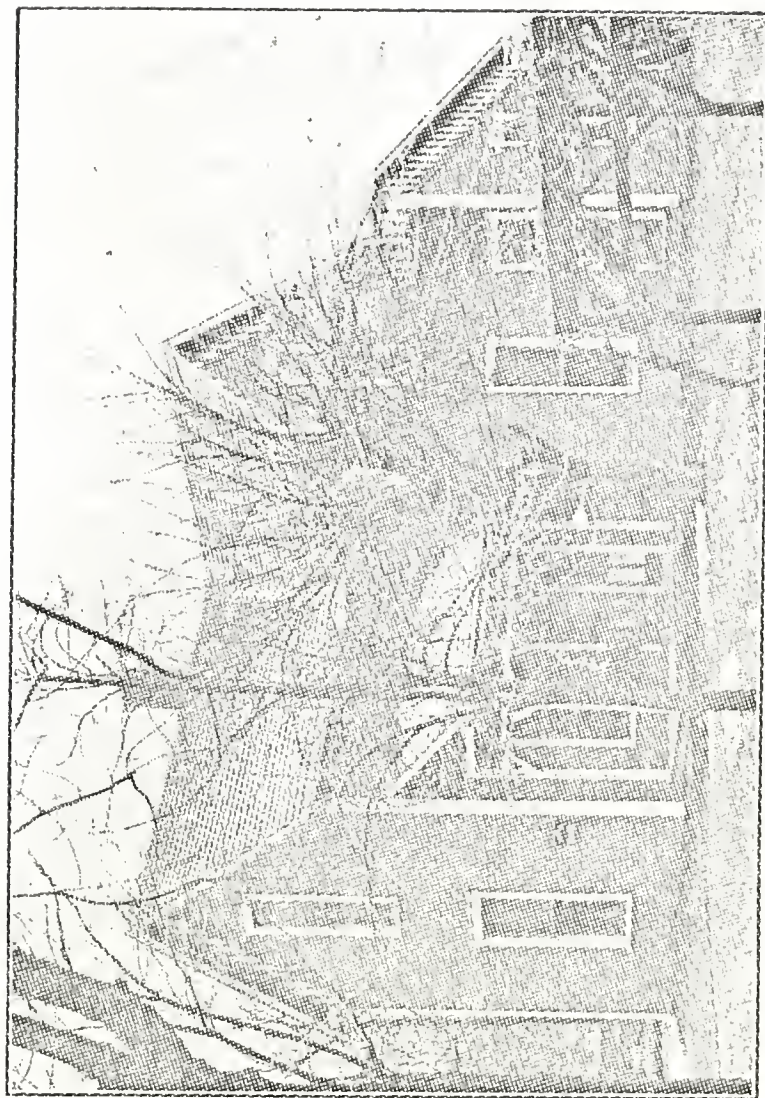
Residence of Scott Lewis.





Residence of Imla W. Cooper.





Residence of W. L. Misener, M. D.



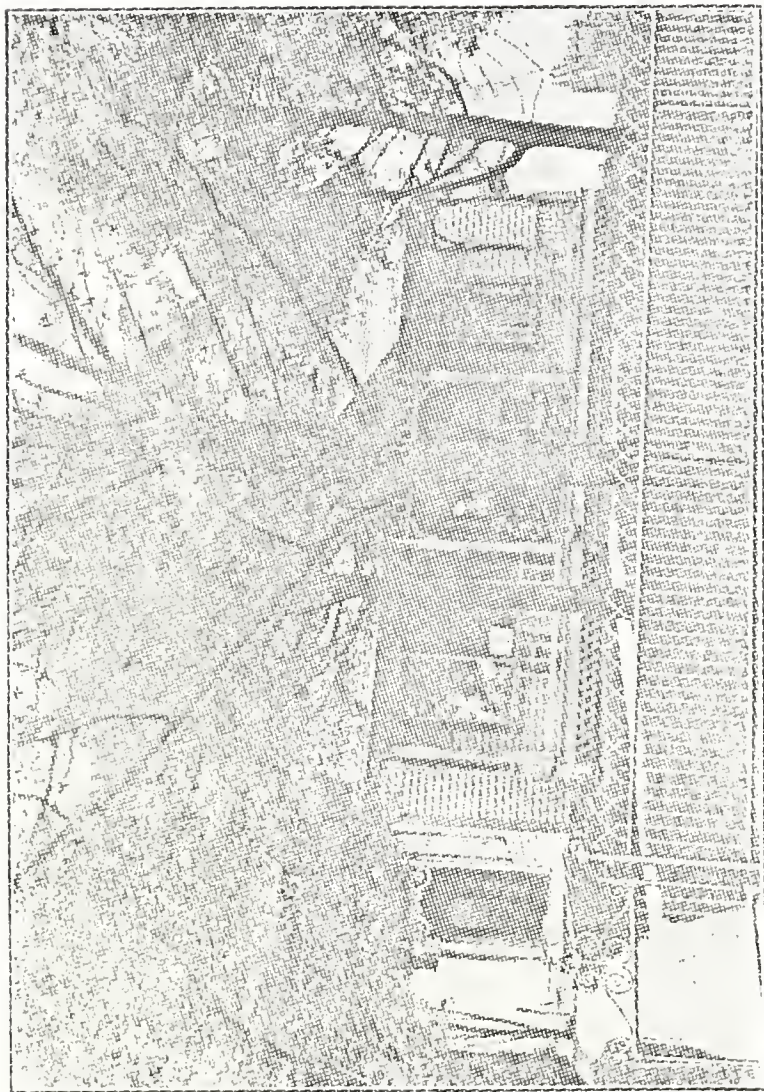




Residence of Mrs. Jacob Fatic.

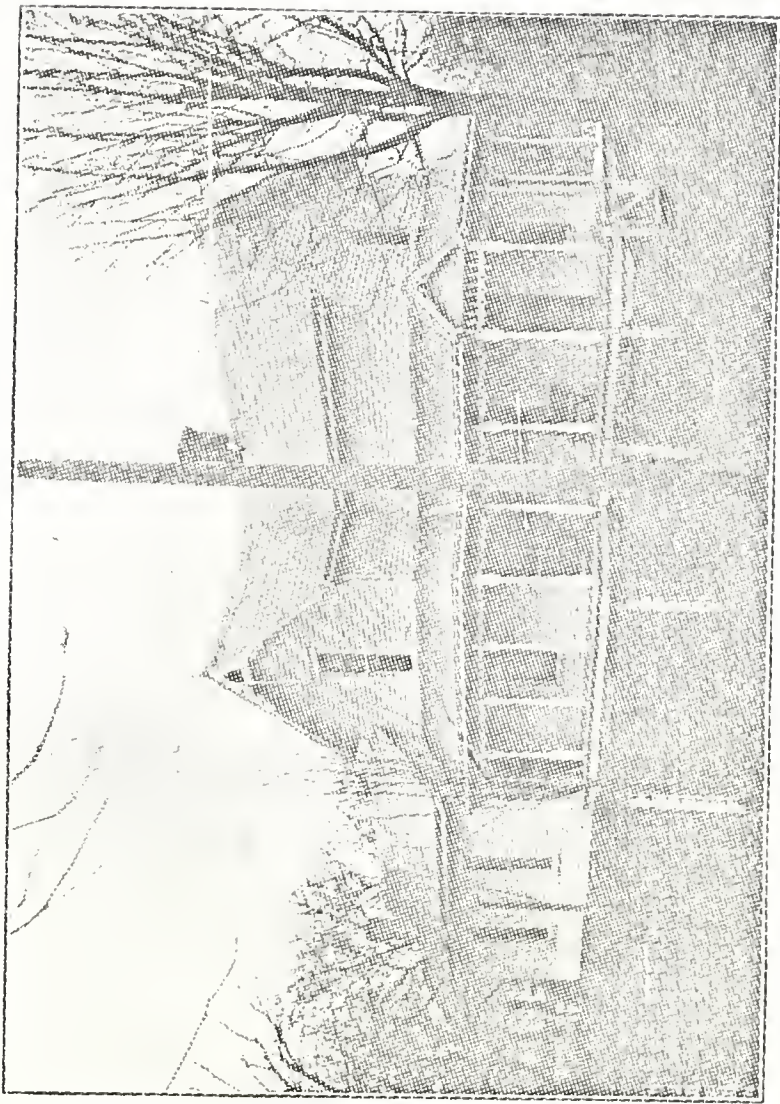






**Residence of Amos Kisting.**

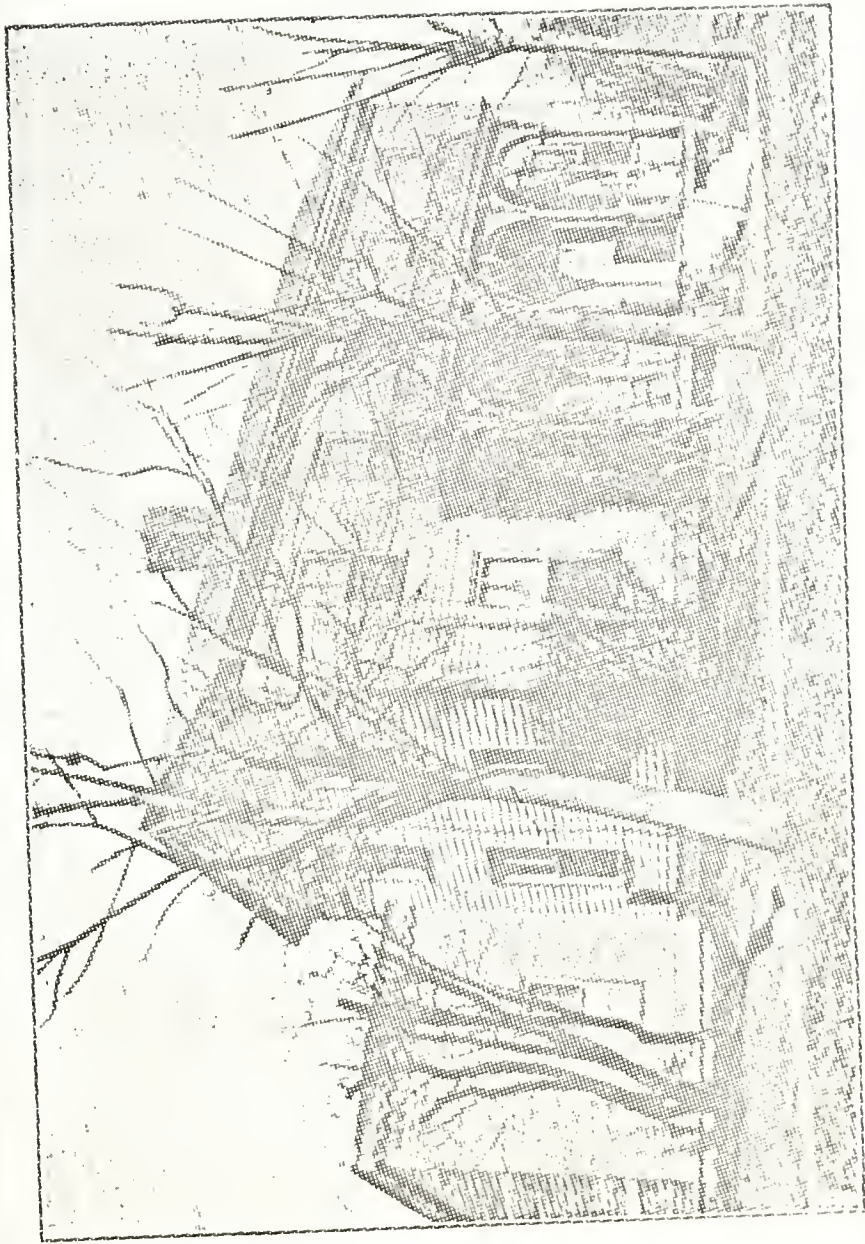




Residence of Cyrus W. Wood.







Residence of Dr. Joseph Weeks.

















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